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**Constructions of Cultural Diversity and
Intercultural Education:
Critical Ethnographic Case Studies of
Greek-Cypriot Primary Schools**



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Abstract

This thesis critically examines constructions of cultural diversity and intercultural education in Greek-Cypriot primary schools. Since 2008 the Cyprus Ministry of Education has officially adopted the Europeanized rhetoric of intercultural education and inclusion as the most effective approach to the increasing diversity in schools. As part of the wider reform of the education system aiming at the creation of the ‘democratic’ and ‘humane’ school, a new curriculum was introduced in 2010 to promote equality of opportunity for access, participation and attainment. Drawing on relevant key theoretical ideas, this study has developed a theoretical framework of intercultural education to assist the critical examination of constructions of intercultural education in Greek-Cypriot primary schools.

For the purposes of this study, three-month long critical ethnographic case studies of intercultural education were constructed in three urban Greek-Cypriot primary schools with different profiles. Rich data was generated through in-depth, semi-structured interviews with head teachers, teachers and teachers of Greek as an additional language. The study also engaged in non-participant lesson and school observations, developed participatory methods with children, and undertook semi-participant observations of pupils’ play during breaks and of extra-curricular activities. Relevant policy and school documents were also analysed.

The findings of this study reveal that constructions of cultural diversity and intercultural education in Greek-Cypriot primary schools are characterized by contradictions, inconsistencies and a lack of theoretical understanding of issues related to cultural diversity and intercultural education. Different cultures and identities were constructed in different, though mainly, essentialist ways by teachers from the dominant cultural group. This study argues that the concept of cultural diversity needs to be treated with some caution, as it tends to homogenise non-dominant cultures and thus, it may obscure the complexities involved in engagement with and recognition of different Others.

Key differences between the two mainstream schools and the ZEP (Zone of Educational Priority) school which participated in this study in terms of the degree of autonomy and financial support officially granted by the Ministry; the school leadership style and the head teacher's construction of diversity and intercultural education; the composition of the pupil population; and the dominant institutional discourses about diversity affected the extent to which and the ways in which teachers exercised their agency in relation to intercultural education. Moreover, the teachers' positioning in the Greek Cypriot society and the extent to which they had developed a political literacy and critical consciousness through their life and professional histories also affected their constructions of cultural diversity and intercultural education and the extent to which they perceived and exercised their role as agents of change. In turn, the ways in which cultural diversity and intercultural education were constructed in each class influenced the extent to which and the ways in which bilingual and/or bicultural children used their agency and negotiated their cultural positionings.

The findings carry implications for policy and practice. The study highlights the need for a coherent theoretical framework of intercultural education to enable schools and teachers to develop a theoretically-grounded understanding of intercultural education and move beyond fragmented practices that leave structural inequalities and barriers to educational achievement unacknowledged and unaddressed.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis has been composed solely by myself and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part, for any other degree or professional qualification. The work presented is entirely my own.

Emilia Georgiou

Emilia Georgiou

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Contents

Abstract	i
Declaration	iii
Acknowledgements	v
Introduction	1
Rationale	1
Personal Motivation	4
Research Aim and Questions	5
Structure of Thesis	6
Chapter 1 Research Context	9
1.1 Historical and Political Context	9
1.2 Understandings of and Attitudes towards Diversity in Greek-Cypriot Society	10
1.2.1 Indigenous Minorities	11
1.2.2 Migrants, Asylum Seekers and Refugees	13
1.3 Greek-Cypriot Education System and Intercultural Education	16
1.4 Review of the Intercultural Education Policy	21
1.5 Conclusion	28
Chapter 2 Conceptual and Theoretical Framework	29
2.1 Brief History of Intercultural Education	29
2.2 Essentialism vs Anti-Essentialism: Moving beyond the Divide	35

2.3 ‘Othering’ and ‘the Superior Self’	38
2.4 Recognition	44
2.5 Deconstruction	49
2.6 Border Crossing	54
2.7 Conclusion	62
 Chapter 3 Literature Review	 65
PART A Policy Enactment and Teacher Agency	65
3.1 Curriculum Policy Reforms and Teacher Agency	65
3.2 Factors Shaping Teacher Agency and Policy Enactment	67
3.2.1 Teachers’ Beliefs	67
3.2.2 Teachers’ Knowledge	73
3.2.3 Institutional Context	76
3.2.3.1 Institutional Discourses	76
3.2.3.2 Power Relations	79
3.2.4 Historical and Socio-Political Context	82
PART B Research on Intercultural Education and Cultural Diversity in Cyprus	84
3.3 Review of Empirical Studies on Intercultural Education and Cultural Diversity in Cyprus	84
3.3.1 Teachers’ Conceptualisations and Constructions of Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Education	85
3.3.2 Children and Cultural Diversity	92
3.3.3 School Leadership and Intercultural Education	98
3.3.4 Research Gaps and Contribution of this Study	98
3.4 Conclusion	99

Chapter 4 Methodology	101
4.1 Research Aim and Questions	101
4.2 Philosophical Assumptions Informing the Study	102
4.3 Methodology: A Qualitative Framework	106
4.3.1 Rationale for Taking a Qualitative Approach	106
4.3.2 Critical Ethnographic Case Study	108
4.3.3 Major Critiques of the Methodology Used and My Response	112
4.4 Sampling & Gaining Access	114
4.4.1 The Process of Sampling	114
4.4.1.1 Schools	114
4.4.1.2 Classes	116
4.4.1.3 Participants	116
4.4.2 Access	118
4.5 Research Methods	119
4.5.1 Interviews	119
4.5.2 Observations	122
4.5.3 Participatory Methods	126
4.5.3.1 Critical Appraisal of the Participatory Methods	129
4.5.4 Documents	131
4.6 Fieldwork	131
4.7 Data Analysis	133
4.8 Validity and Reliability	139
4.9 Ethical Considerations and Dilemmas	143
4.10 My Roles and Identities in the Field	147

4.11	Reflexive Auto-Critique	152
4.12	Conclusion	154

Chapter 5: Constructions of Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Education in St Lazarus School 157

5.1	School Context	158
5.2	Research Participants	159
5.3	School Ethos and Intercultural Education	160
5.4	School Leadership and Intercultural Education	170
5.5	Teachers' Political, Historical and Sociocultural Narratives and Intercultural Education	176
5.6	Teacher Agency and Intercultural Education	184
5.7	Children's Understandings, Experiences of, and Responses to Cultural Diversity	188
5.8	Conclusion	194

Chapter 6: Constructions of Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Education in the ZEP School 199

6.1	School Context	199
6.2	Research Participants	201
6.3	School Ethos and Intercultural Education	202
6.4	School Leadership and Intercultural Education	212
6.5	Teachers' Political, Historical and Sociocultural Narratives and Intercultural Education	218
6.6	Teacher Agency and Intercultural Education	229
6.7	Children's Understandings, Experiences of, and Responses to Cultural Diversity	233

6.8 Conclusion	240
Chapter 7: Constructions of Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Education in Aphrodite School	243
7.1 School Context	243
7.2 Research Participants	244
7.3 School Ethos and Intercultural Education	246
7.4 School Leadership and Intercultural Education	259
7.5 Teachers' Political, Historical and Sociocultural Narratives and Intercultural Education	265
7.6 Teacher Agency and Intercultural Education	274
7.7 Children's Understandings, Experiences of, and Responses to Cultural Diversity	278
7.8 Conclusion	283
Chapter 8: Cross-Case Analysis and Discussion	287
PART A Constructions of Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Education across the Three Schools	288
8.1 School Ethos and Intercultural Education	288
8.2 School Leadership and Intercultural Education	292
8.3 Teachers' Political, Historical and Sociocultural Narratives and Intercultural Education	294
8.4 Teacher Agency and Intercultural Education	297
8.5 Children's Understandings, Experiences of, and Responses to Cultural Diversity	299
PART B Discussion	301
8.6 School Leadership and Engagement with Intercultural Education	302

8.7 Teachers' Conscientization and the Role of the Institutional Context	310
8.8 Conflicting Ideologies at the National Education Level & Local Professional Decision-Making	317
8.9 The School's Role in Shaping Children's Cultural Positionings and Agency	320
Conclusion	329
Introduction	329
9.1 Answering the Research Questions	329
9.2 Implications for Theory	343
9.3. Implications for Policy and Practice	347
9.4 Implications for Further Research	349
9.5 Final Reflections	350
References	353
Appendices	383
Appendix A: Participant Information Leaflet for Staff Members	383
Appendix B: Consent Forms for Staff Members	387
Appendix C: Participant Information Leaflet for Pupils	391
Appendix D: Consent Form for Pupils	395
Appendix E: Information Letter for Parents	397
Appendix F: Consent Form for Parents	401
Appendix G: Interview Schedule for Head Teachers	403
Appendix H: Interview Schedule for Teachers	407

Appendix I: Interview Schedule for GAL Teachers	413
Appendix J: Observation Schedules	417
Appendix K: Description of Participatory Methods	423
Appendix L: Examples of Children’s Posters on Cultural Diversity	427
Appendix M: Photos for the Photo Elicitation Activity	429
Appendix N: Sentence Completion Task	433
Appendix O: Data Collection Plan	434

Introduction

Rationale

Globalisation, mass migration, involving both economic migrants and the forced displacement of millions of refugees and asylum seekers due to war, conflicts and persecution have given rise to persistent concerns within nation-states about how to foster social cohesion and at the same time, recognize the diversity in society. These concerns have been magnified in the last two decades due to the growth of extremism and terrorism and the increasing fear that the instigators of terrorism may be hiding within the high numbers of refugees and economic migrants. Within this context of rapid social and demographic changes, uncertainty and fear, the EU Education Ministers and the European Commissioner (2015) have set several objectives to pursue in response to the aforementioned challenges. These include combatting discrimination, racism and inequalities and promoting justice, inclusion, equity, democracy, intercultural dialogue and active citizenship through education. However, the extent to which the educational approach to cultural diversity advocated by European supranational bodies (e.g. European Commission, 2007; Council of Europe, 2008), namely intercultural education, contributes to the achievement of these goals is open to question.

The absence of a universally agreed understanding and theoretical framework of intercultural education (Aguado & Malik, 2006; Dunne, 2011; Portera, 2011) and of evidence of how it could be practically applied (Gundara & Portera, 2008) leave it open to multiple interpretations and constructions. Several scholars have described intercultural education as marking a shift from mere description of distinct cultures – a common critique of liberal multicultural education - to cultural interaction (e.g. Bleszynska, 2008; Portera, 2011; Maniatis, 2012). However, like in the case of liberal multicultural education, conceptualizations and constructions of intercultural education tend to reflect an ‘add-on’ to the curriculum rather than a comprehensive approach that transforms existing educational systems; thus, they

end up leaving discrimination and educational inequities unaddressed (Aguado & Malik, 2006; Gorski, 2008; Allemann-Ghionda, 2012). This raises questions about the rationale underlying the promotion by European supranational bodies of the concept of intercultural education instead of approaches, such as anti-racist education or critical multicultural education, which directly challenge the status quo and social injustices, focusing on racism and on the intersection of various forms of inequities, respectively (May & Sleeter, 2010). This study suggests that there is a need for conceptual clarity and research on the implementation of intercultural education in different national contexts, taking into account their political, socio-economic and historical particularities (Coulby, 2006; Gundara & Portera, 2008; Portera, 2011). This will enable a deeper understanding of current constructions of intercultural education across the EU member states that have adopted this approach and thus, of how different education systems can move closer to achieving the aforementioned objectives set by the EU Education Ministers and the European Commissioner (2015). By addressing the aforementioned need, this study contributes to knowledge in the fields of intercultural and multicultural education, engaging with issues of social justice and equity, teacher agency and policy enactment.

To achieve this aim, this study critically examines interpretations and constructions of cultural diversity and intercultural education (I.E.) in Cyprus, focusing on the Greek-Cypriot part of Cyprus, which has experienced an unprecedented influx of migrants in the last two decades (Trimikliniotis & Demetriou, 2011). Drawing on the definition of ‘migrants’ provided on the UNHCR (2016a) website, this term is used in this study to refer to people who ‘choose to move...mainly to improve their lives by finding work, or in some cases for education, family reunion, or other reasons’. Moreover, the term ‘cultural diversity’ is defined as ethnic, linguistic, religious and cultural diversity in this thesis. In other words, this term is used to refer to the diversity of people’s ethnic, linguistic and / or religious backgrounds and / or beliefs, manners and customs in society.

Cyprus introduced the intercultural education policy to schools in 2002. Earlier studies on intercultural education in Greek-Cypriot schools (e.g. Zembylas, 2010e; Papamichael, 2011; Theodorou, 2011) largely suggest that cultural diversity has been misrecognised in the nationalistic, ethnocentric and monocultural Greek-Cypriot education system. However, in 2011 a new curriculum was introduced to schools, as part of a wider reform aiming at the Europeanisation of the Greek-Cypriot education system. The new curriculum invites teachers to use their pedagogical autonomy to provide quality learning to all pupils. Moreover, it has been described as encompassing intercultural education in its main goal: the creation of the ‘democratic’ and ‘humane’ school (Hajisoteriou, Neophytou & Angelides, 2012). Thus, this reform seems to open up new opportunities for engagement with intercultural education in schools in Cyprus. How easy is it, however, for teachers who have been operating in a historically nationalist and monocultural, highly centralised education system to redefine their beliefs about their role, about cultural diversity and about their practices? Challenging established beliefs and practices is further complicated in this context by the unresolved conflict and ethnic division, and the economic crisis, which struck Cyprus a year before this study and reinforced a sense of insecurity and xenophobia among the Greek Cypriots, as evidenced by the reappearance of the extreme right in Cypriot politics (Katsourides, 2013). Based on interviews with head teachers, teachers and children and observations of teachers’ practices, Hajisoteriou and Angelides’ study (2016), which, to my knowledge, is the only one focusing on intercultural education after the reform, suggests that confusion is reflected in the participants’ conceptualizations of cultural diversity and definitions of intercultural education.

The present study further contributes to the existing research in Cyprus through an in-depth exploration of the ways in which primary school head teachers’, teachers’ and children’s understandings and constructions of cultural diversity and intercultural education are shaped by the interplay between the participants’ profiles and the features of the institutional context, such as the composition of the pupil population and staff, institutional discourses about cultural diversity and power relationships in the school and the extent to which they reproduce or attempt

to transform the unequal power relations in the Greek-Cypriot society. Thus, it contributes to understanding how the institutional context may affect possible constructions of cultural diversity and intercultural education. It also highlights the complexities involved in translating the EU-recommended approach of intercultural education in practice in primary schools in the historical, political, sociocultural and economic context of Cyprus.

Personal Motivation

My interest in intercultural education grounded in social justice and equity arose from my personal and professional experiences of cultural difference and discrimination. Being the child of Greek-Cypriot refugees, I was born and raised in Greece. When I went to school, my parents used to tell me: ‘Don’t use Cypriot words in school! The children won’t understand you and may make fun of you.’ It was clear to me quite early that my Greek-Cypriot background should not interfere with school. Schooling has not been a challenge for me, because I was born and raised in Greece and the two cultures, the Greek-Cypriot and the Greek one, are distinctive but intertwined. However, my personal experiences of cultural difference and my parents’ narratives about their forced displacement and experiences in Greece as refugees have enabled me to develop empathy for children who daily encounter the challenge of moving across cultures, when moving from home to school. As a teacher in Greece, I realized the systemic barriers to the success of certain groups of pupils, such as newly arrived migrants and pupils of low socioeconomic background. This was particularly evident in the secondary level, where the focus on exams and on covering the material defined by the Ministry of Education appeared to greatly disadvantage these pupils. In addition, my migration to Scotland has been accompanied, to my surprise and frustration, by various experiences of discrimination. This kind of voluntary displacement made me very aware of what it is like being an outsider looking in. All these experiences have made me wish to strive through my work for a fair education that provides all pupils with equitable educational opportunities.

Finding out that interculturalism and equity in education constitute basic tenets underpinning Cyprus' efforts to reform its educational system was a welcome surprise to me. Having been raised with stories about my parents' childhood in Ammochostos and the dream of a reunified Cyprus where all ethnic groups peacefully coexist and respect each other, I was happy to see that Cyprus has started taking steps in that direction. In order to ensure, though, that Cyprus' educational reforms do not restrict intercultural education to the adoption of a Europeanised rhetoric, it is important that changes permeate all aspects of the educational process and particularly what is happening in the schools and in the classrooms, which are the main focus of this study.

Research Aim and Questions

The aim of this research was to critically examine interpretations and constructions of cultural diversity and intercultural education in Greek-Cypriot state primary schools. For this purpose, this study constructed critical ethnographic case studies of intercultural education in three urban Greek-Cypriot primary schools with different profiles: i. St Lazarus school, a mainstream school with low to middle SES, ethnically mixed pupil population; ii. Aphrodite school, a mainstream school with middle to high SES, mainly Greek-Cypriot pupils; and iii. a ZEP (Zone of Educational Priority) school with very low to middle SES, mainly migrant pupils. To achieve this aim, the following research questions were set:

1. What are primary school head teachers' and teachers' beliefs, understandings and practices in relation to intercultural education and cultural diversity?
2. What do teachers and head teachers perceive as the challenges to, and opportunities for, the implementation of intercultural education in Greek-Cypriot primary schools?

3. How do primary school pupils understand and respond to cultural diversity and possible intercultural education developments within diverse school environments?

Using interviews with head teachers and teachers, observations of teaching practice and pupil response and of pupils' play during break time as well as interactive activities with pupils I set out to explore the authentic experiences and interactions connected with IE in three diverse school contexts.

Structure of Thesis

This thesis is organized into nine chapters. Chapter 1 provides an overview of the national context of this study, which mediates the adoption, implementation and enactments of the EU-recommended policy of intercultural education. It begins by sketching the Cypriot historical and political context and continues by discussing the prevailing understandings of, and attitudes towards, indigenous minorities, migrants and asylum seekers in society. It, then, presents and discusses the education system and recent developments in relation to intercultural education. It ends with a critical analysis of intercultural education policy guidelines, highlighting recent shifts in the policy discourse.

Chapter 2 presents the conceptual and theoretical framework of this study. It examines the rationale underlying the promotion of the approach of intercultural education in different contexts and the debates about the meaning and operationalization of intercultural education. It problematizes this concept and the absence of a theoretical framework of intercultural education. To address this gap and achieve the aim of this study, I developed a theoretical framework based on the discussion of key relevant theoretical ideas, namely essentialism, constructions of the relation between the Self and the Other, recognition, deconstruction and border crossing.

Chapter 3 is divided into two parts. The first part draws on literature on policy enactment and teacher agency and presents a framework based on a discussion of the following factors, which may affect teachers' engagement with the policy of intercultural education and the new curriculum in Cyprus: teachers' beliefs; teachers' knowledge; institutional context; and socio-political context. This framework complements the criticality and depth provided by the theoretical framework of intercultural education presented in the previous chapter, by enabling a comprehensive understanding of factors shaping constructions of intercultural education in each of the three schools. The second part of the chapter reviews research on cultural diversity and intercultural education in Cyprus and identifies the research gaps in this context.

Chapter 4 outlines the methodological approach of this study. It explains the philosophical assumptions underpinning it and the choice of a qualitative approach and specifically, of critical ethnographic case study. It also presents the conceptualization of childhood in this study and its methodological implications. It then discusses the data collection process, focusing on issues, like sampling, access to the field, the research methods, my roles and identities in the field, and ethical considerations and dilemmas. The chapter concludes with my approach to data analysis, the way in which issues of validity and reliability have been addressed, and my reflexive auto-critique.

Each of chapters 5, 6 and 7 presents and critically discusses the findings in each of the three case study schools, providing information about the context of each school and the research participants. Chapter 8 presents the cross-case analysis and then discusses the key ideas that emerged out of it and their implications for constructions of intercultural education in Greek Cypriot state primary schools. Chapter 9 summarizes the findings of this study, answers the research questions and discusses the implications of this research for theory, policy, practice and future research.

Chapter 1 Research Context

As constructions of intercultural education are mediated by the political, historical and sociocultural context in each country (Bleszynska, 2008), this chapter provides an overview of the Cypriot context, in which the three case study schools are embedded. It begins by outlining the Cypriot historical and political context, and continues by discussing understandings of, and attitudes towards, cultural diversity in Greek-Cypriot society. It then examines the Greek-Cypriot education system in relation to intercultural education and ends by critically reviewing the intercultural education policy in Cyprus.

1.1 Historical and Political Context

Cyprus is an island in the eastern Mediterranean, which lies at the crossroads of East and West, of Asia and Europe, of Islam and Christianity. Its strategic geographical position attracted a number of conquerors in the past and the island has been historically characterized by wide diversity in terms of religion, culture (Varnava, 2010), ethnicity and language (Hadjioannou, Tsiplakou & Kappler, 2011). This section outlines Cyprus' recent political history, which, though highly contested, carries significant implications for constructions of cultural diversity.

After three centuries of Ottoman rule, the island became a British colony in 1878. During the British colonial period, there was a rise of ethnic nationalism in the Greek-Cypriot and the Turkish-Cypriot communities of the island of Cyprus. The Greek-Cypriots pursued *enosis* -the union of Cyprus with Greece – and the Turkish-Cypriots called for *taksim* – the partition of Cyprus, allowing the union, or close association, of one part with Turkey and the other with Greece (Papadakis, 2008). In 1960 Cyprus gained its independence from Britain. The 1960 Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus recognized two communities, the Greek-Cypriot (about 80% of the population) and the Turkish-Cypriot (about 18%),

which would have equal power in a consociational system (Trimikliniotis & Demetriou, 2011). Suggested constitutional changes privileging the Greek-Cypriots triggered intercommunal violence in the 1960s (ibid.). The interethnic conflict culminated in 1974 when Turkey invaded and occupied the northern part of the island (34% of the island). This resulted in the displacement of 162.000 Greek-Cypriots and 80.000 Turkish-Cypriots (ibid.) and the division of the island into two relatively ethnically homogenized parts. The southern part is mainly inhabited by Greek-Cypriots and its government is officially recognised as the government of the Republic of Cyprus, although it only controls the southern part. The northern part is inhabited mainly by Turkish-Cypriots and Turks and is controlled by Turkish-Cypriot authorities. In 1983, the Turkish-Cypriot authorities declared the establishment of the ‘Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus’ (TRNC), which, however, has only been recognized by Turkey. The two ethnic communities remained geographically, politically and socially completely segregated until the partial lifting of restrictions of movement across the ‘Dead Zone’- the UN patrolled Green Line that separates the two parts - in 2003, when some of the checkpoints were opened up by the Turkish-Cypriot administration. Despite the continuing negotiations for a solution to what is called the ‘Cyprus issue’, no agreement has been reached yet and the division remains.

In 2004, the Republic of Cyprus became a full member of the European Union, but the northern part remains a *de jure* part of EU as part of the Republic. Cyprus’ accession to the EU has had significant sociocultural and political implications for the island, as explained in the following sections.

1.2 Understandings of and Attitudes towards Diversity in Greek-Cypriot Society

The political and historical context described above has contributed significantly to shaping constructions of identity and diversity in Greek-Cypriot society. This

section discusses prevailing understandings of and attitudes towards: i. indigenous minorities and ii. migrants and asylum seekers.

1.2.1 Indigenous Minorities

Cyprus has historically been an ethnically, linguistically, religiously and culturally diverse country (Varnava, 2010; Hadjioannou, Tsiplakou & Kappler, 2011). However, the binary division of the Cypriot population into two main ethnic communities, the Greek-Cypriots and the Turkish-Cypriots, and the prevalence of the ‘us versus them’ discourse have rendered the diversity within the indigenous population largely invisible, as explained below.

Several factors have contributed to this binary division of the Cypriot population. During British rule, the separate schools of the two communities contributed to the rise of ethnic nationalism in both communities, by promoting incompatible ethno-nationalist identities and strengthening the communities’ ties with their motherlands, Greece and Turkey (Bryant, 2004; Lange, 2012). Article 2 of the 1960 Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus formalised and normalised the binary division of the Cypriot population into Greek / Christians and Turkish / Muslims (bicommunalism). This constitutionally established division has rendered the possibility of a shared Cypriot national identity that extends across ethnic and religious boundaries difficult to imagine and realise (Constantinou, 2007). After the 1974 war and the ensuing absolute separation of the two communities, there were ‘intensive processes of “nation-building” on both sides, which have heightened their respective “Greekness” and “Turkishness”, while constructing the other community as the “ethnic-Other” and “arch-enemy” of the collective Self’ (Zembylas et al., 2011, p. 333). This construction of opposing, essentialised identities has been reinforced by the prevalence of a narrative of unilateral victimhood, which constructs the collective Self as the victim of human rights violations and injustice committed by the barbaric ‘ethnic-Other’ (Hajisoteriou, 2012a).

The constitutionally established binary division of the Cypriot population and the processes of nation-building and 'ethnic homogenization' (Constantinou, 2007) have had adverse effects on the other indigenous minority ethnic groups' rights and status (Varnava, 2010), as these were subsumed under one of these two communities. Specifically, the Maronites, the Armenians and the Latins, all of whom are described as 'religious groups' in the Constitution, chose to belong to the Greek-Cypriot community. The Cypriot Roma were considered part of the Turkish-Cypriot community due to their assumed common language and religion (Trimikliniotis & Demetriou, 2011). While after the 1974 war the majority of the Roma population moved to the northern part of the island, after the partial lifting of restrictions on movement across the two parts, Roma groups moved to the south and settled in deprived urban areas (Theodorou & Symeou, 2013). All the groups inhabiting the southern part of Cyprus have been experiencing the marginalisation of their cultural and linguistic capital (Varnava, 2010) and their increasing assimilation into the Greek-Cypriot community (Constantinou, 2007; Varnava, 2010). As regards politics, the three 'religious groups' have the right to be represented in the Cypriot Parliament, but their representatives do not have the right to vote (ECRI, 2011). The Roma are not represented. As the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) (2011) reports, the Roma in Cyprus experience social, political and geographical marginalization, discrimination and prejudice. This may relate to their membership of the Turkish-Cypriot community, the ethnic Other. Furthermore, it could be ascribed to the great divergence between their culture and the dominant Greek-Cypriot culture and their resistance to assimilation. In conclusion, as the evidence shows, power inequalities and discrimination are deeply ingrained in the Greek-Cypriot political system and in society, as is further illustrated in the next section.

Meanwhile, there has also been an alternative leftist ideology, 'Cypriocentrism', which has been described as civic nationalism (Charalambous, Charalambous & Zembylas, 2013). The ideological clash between Cypriocentrism and the prevailing ethnic nationalism, namely Hellenocentrism, mainly focuses on issues regarding social memory and identity. Each side provides its own historical interpretations and while Hellenocentrism emphasises the Greekness of the Greek-

Cypriots, Cypriocentrism emphasises the common Cypriot identity and culture of all Cypriot people (Mavratsas, 1997; Charalambous et al., 2013). The popularity of Cypriocentrism has increased from 2003 onwards, when significant changes, such as the opening of the checkpoints and the ensuing contact between the two communities, favoured the development of bicomunal relations (Trimikliniotis & Demetriou, 2011; Charalambous et al., 2013).

1.2.2 Migrants, Asylum Seekers and Refugees

Cyprus has recently experienced its sudden and rapid transformation from a country experiencing emigration to a migrant host country (Vrasidas, Themistokleous & Zembylas, 2009; Trimikliniotis & Demetriou, 2011). The sudden demographic and social changes have created several challenges for the Greek-Cypriot government and society regarding the migrants' integration and addressing racism, discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance (Vrasidas et al, 2009).

Increasing demands in the labour force in the southern part of Cyprus and the ensuing amendments to the country's restrictive immigration policies in the late 1990s and Cyprus' accession to the EU in 2004 have been followed by the unprecedented influx of economic migrants. According to Eurostat (2015), in 2013 - the year of my data collection- Cyprus had the third highest immigration rate in the EU relative to the size of its population. The migrants' countries of origin include non-EU countries (e.g. the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Russia, India, Pakistan, China and Arab countries) and EU countries (e.g. Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, UK, Poland) (Trimikliniotis & Demetriou, 2011). Most migrant workers from Eastern Europe, south-east Asia, China and Arab countries are employed as domestic workers, in the manufacturing industry, in construction, in the service industry and in agriculture (ibid.). Moreover, there has been a significant increase in the number of asylum seekers and refugees (Hajisoteriou, 2012a). According to UNHCR (2016b), there were 7067 refugees and 2252 asylum seekers in Cyprus in 2015. At the same time, the rate of emigration was twice as high as the rate of immigration

in 2013, which could be attributed to the economic crisis that struck Cyprus in 2012-2013 and the ensuing imposition of severe austerity measures and the high unemployment rate (see Eurostat, 2015). As is evident, Greek-Cypriot society has undergone significant demographic and social changes recently, for which it did not seem to be prepared.

Negative attitudes towards the migrants, asylum seekers and refugees have been recorded in society as well as in the media and political discourse (see ECRI, 2011; Trimikliniotis & Demetriou, 2011). The media have tended to represent migrants as a threat to the Hellenic culture and as responsible for the rise in unemployment and criminality (Hajisoteriou, 2012a; Milioni, Spyridou & Vadratsikas, 2015). Similarly, political discourse has often portrayed asylum seekers, migrants and Turkish-Cypriots as abusers of the benefit system, as ‘invaders’, as posing a threat to the national identity and culture and turning Cypriots into ‘second class citizens’ (Trimikliniotis & Demetriou, 2011). Such representations of economic migrants and asylum seekers, commonly found in other parts of the world, too, like Britain (e.g. see Sivanandan, 2001), seem to have contributed to a climate of insecurity, fear, suspicion and racism in Greek-Cypriot society, as manifested by the increasing popularity of the far-right political party, ELAM (see Trimikliniotis & Demetriou, 2011; Katsourides, 2013). According to the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX, 2014), anti-migrant attitudes are higher in Cyprus than on average in the EU. Of course, not all migrants and asylum seekers experience the same degree of discrimination and racism. Various factors, such as nationality, colour and gender, seem to affect societal attitudes (e.g. see Anthias, 2000; Trimikliniotis & Demetriou, 2010, 2011). According to the ECRI’s 2006 report, migrant workers, asylum seekers and Pontian Greeks along with the indigenous groups of Turkish-Cypriots and Roma are the groups who are more exposed to racial discrimination in Cyprus. Overall, migrants and asylum seekers seem to have been perceived as a further threat to the Greek-Cypriots’ already destabilized political and economic power due to the ongoing conflict and the economic crisis. For example, Drousioti’s (2012) study of Cypriot adults’ views regarding migration found that 64.2% of the 1177 Greek-Cypriot participants totally agreed that migration causes a rise in unemployment among permanent citizens, 42.1% totally

agreed that migrants cause insecurity to the Cypriot citizens and 40.3% totally disagreed that the migrants should have the right for permanent residence in Cyprus.

Racism remains largely unacknowledged and unaddressed in this context. As Trimikliniotis and Demetriou (2011) state, '[t]he racism debate with migrants at the receiving end and Greek-Cypriots as the perpetrators d[oes] not 'fit in' the national story of victimisation of Greek-Cypriots' (p. 24). Conceptualising the ethnic 'Self' as the perpetrator of racism and injustice is not a possibility within the framework of the dominant narrative of unilateral victimhood. This narrative combined with the legitimacy of ethnic animosity and ethnic homogenization in this context seem to hinder the Cypriots' realization of how their institutions, policies, processes, actions, attitudes and dominant narratives may discriminate against and disadvantage certain groups of people. In fact, the system seems to normalise and reinforce racism, as argued also in the previous section, and as suggested by Cyprus' restrictive immigration policies, which provide limited access and rights to non-EU citizens and prevent their long-term residence in the country under a policy of 'temporary' migration (Trimikliniotis & Demetriou, 2011; MIPEX, 2014).

European institutions, such as the ECRI, have exerted pressure on Cyprus to develop a more inclusive, tolerant and multicultural society, in line with the EU's commitment to interculturalism (see Hajisoteriou, Neophytou & Angelides, 2012). Trimikliniotis and Demetriou (2011) note that this pressure 'coincides with an increasing polarisation over tolerance and acceptance of the 'other'' (p.9). They attribute this shift in the Greek-Cypriots' attitudes towards cultural diversity to their encounter with the new realities of the increasing diversity in the post-accession period and of the contact with the primary ethnic Other after the partial lifting of the restrictions of movement.

Hence, as regards understandings of, and attitudes towards, diversity, Cyprus seems to currently be at a transitional stage. The Cypriot population seems to oscillate between, on the one hand, acceptance of, and respect for, the Other and,

on the other hand, intolerance and ethnic nationalism; between ‘philoxenia’ (hospitality) - a highly appreciated value in the Cypriot culture - and ‘xenophobia’, which could be seen as an extension or a transmutation of the historically entrenched hatred and fear of the ethnic Other.

The next two sections focus on how the Greek-Cypriot education system and the Greek-Cypriot intercultural education policy have been affected by the aforementioned developments in the historical, political, economic and sociocultural context of Cyprus.

1.3 Greek-Cypriot Education System and Intercultural Education

Education in Cyprus is free and compulsory for all children from the age of four years and eight months to the age of fifteen. This right extends to children of migrants, including illegal immigrants. Primary education is provided from the age of five years and eight months to the age of twelve and is not exam-oriented.

The Greek-Cypriot education system has been highly centralized. The Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC) appoints, transfers, promotes and appraises teachers and provides them with opportunities for professional development. It is responsible for policy-making, the curriculum and for the textbooks, most of which are imported from Greece, and, thus, seem to contribute to engendering a Greek identity and consciousness.

The Greek-Cypriot education system has traditionally been permeated by Hellenocentrism and has contributed to engendering a Greek national identity in opposition to the primary ethnic Other (Spyrou, 2002; Charalambous, Charalambous & Zembylas, 2013; Philippou & Theodorou, 2014). A nationalist ethos and othering discourses have been found to permeate history textbooks (e.g. Papadakis, 2008), school commemorative events (e.g. Zembylas, 2013), teachers’ discourses and practices (e.g. Spyrou, 2002, 2006) and policies (e.g. Theodorou, 2014). A characteristic example is the MoEC-defined policy of ‘I know, I don’t

forget, I claim' (henceforth 'I don't forget'), which emerged as a main educational objective after the 1974 war. Specifically, 'I don't forget' focuses on building a collective memory of the occupied territories, of the Turkish invasion and of its devastating consequences for the Greek-Cypriots (Charalambous, Charalambous & Zembylas, 2014). It, thus, adopts a Hellenocentric perspective, stressing the cultural Greekness of the occupied areas, reproducing the unilateral victimhood narrative and largely ignoring the sufferings of the Turkish-Cypriot community (ibid.). As stated by the MoEC, this objective is expected to be promoted throughout the whole curriculum and all schools are expected to organize relevant school-wide activities. The unresolved political problem tends to be understood as necessitating the cultivation of a strong national consciousness and national pride for the continuing existence of the nation and the liberation of the occupied areas (Spyrou, 2002).

However, after Cyprus' accession to the EU, a reform of its education system was initiated in response to the rapidly increasing diversity in schools and the requirements of European institutions (e.g. ECRI, 2006) that Cyprus promotes respect for diversity and eliminates racism in Greek-Cypriot society. The aim of the reform has been to transform what was described by the Educational Reform Committee (ERC) (2004) as a 'helleno-cyprio-centric, narrowly ethnocentric and culturally monolithic' education system (p. 95) and create the 'democratic' and 'humane' school (MoEC, 2010). This is defined by the MoEC as a school that provides equal opportunities for access, participation and achievement to all pupils, respecting the diversity and multiculturalism in the pupil population and pupils' individual needs (MoEC website). Moreover, it recognises and fully accepts diversity; cultural, linguistic and religious pluralism; and multiple intelligences (ibid.). In line with the EU's educational approach to diversity, the MoEC adopts the intercultural approach, which it describes as 'the most effective educational strategy, which can contribute to mutual acceptance, to cultivating a climate of trust and to eliminating negative stereotypes and prejudice among pupils' (MoEC website - my translation).

As part of the reform, which has been described as a ‘public venture’, involving various stakeholders, such as teachers and parents (ERC, 2008), a new curriculum was introduced in 2010. Although the extent to which teachers were actually involved in the curriculum reform is questionable (see Theodorou, Philippou & Kontovourki, 2017), the new curriculum appears to mark a shift in policy discourse as regards its ideological orientation and the nature of teacher professionalism. Hajisoteriou, Neophytou and Angelides (2012) suggest that the principles of intercultural education are infused in the official text of the curriculum and are encompassed in its main goal, which is the creation of the ‘democratic’ and ‘humane’ school. Moreover, being grounded in the pedagogical principle of ‘learner-centred teaching’, the new curriculum invites teachers to use their ‘pedagogical autonomy for differentiated teaching and teaching that results in learning for all pupils’ (MoEC, 2010, p. 15). This marks a significant shift in the way the policy discourse positions the teacher, who until then ‘[wa]s not considered, treated or rewarded as an autonomous or relatively autonomous professional-pedagogue, but more as a civil “servant/ worker”, as an implementer of decisions taken by others, as a technocrat educator’ (ERC, 2004, p. 16). The new curriculum, thus, seems to acknowledge teachers’ professionalism and invite them to act as agents of change, with a view to ensuring quality education for all pupils. This seems to open up new opportunities for intercultural education, as it officially provides teachers and schools with the space to develop equity-oriented practices.

The reform has received a lot of critique. On the one hand, it has been met with resistance by the Church and by right-wing, conservative and nationalist sections of teachers, parents and political parties, who viewed it as a ‘conspiracy’ to ‘dehellenize’ education (Trimikliniotis & Demetriou, 2011, p. 11). On the other hand, based on her study of discourses about Europe in Greek-Cypriot policy, curricula and textbooks from the early 1990s until 2011-2012, Philippou (2012) observes that:

Although ‘Europe’ increasingly provides a framework to legitimise curricular innovation towards tolerance and respect for diversity, human rights and democracy, reconciliation and inclusion, it is not systematically

addressed in curriculum texts in locally relevant ways to alleviate existing tensions between ethno-national and state identities which have historically fuelled inter-communal conflict and division in Cyprus. Moreover, the construction of citizens seems to increasingly draw from the knowledge economy paradigm and from discourses of efficiency and competitiveness, despite a parallel (and more publicised) agenda for social justice and inclusion in the recent curriculum review documentation. (p. 428)

There seems, thus, to be a tension in the curriculum reform at two levels. At one level, there is a tension between the Europeanised rhetoric of inclusion, social justice, tolerance and respect for diversity and, on the other hand, Hellenocentrism. At another level, there is a tension between this Europeanised rhetoric, which relates to a moral vision of education, and the discourses of efficiency and competitiveness, which relate to market-oriented definitions of education. In fact, despite multiple references to ‘social justice’ and to the need to embrace ‘diversity’, Symeonidou and Mavrou’s (2014) content analysis of the curriculum reveals that these terms are either not defined or used to refer only to some types of diversity, such as gender, ethnicity, religion and socio-economic status, and to some forms of discrimination, such as sexism and racism. The emphasis on gender and minority ethnic groups could relate to Cyprus’ participation in the EU and global educational scene and its commitment to achieve certain goals in these areas. For example, gender equality and access to quality education for all children, particularly girls, minority ethnic children and children in difficult circumstances, are two of the six Education for All goals that Cyprus along with 163 other countries agreed to meet by 2015 at the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000 (UNESCO website). In addition, ECRI (2006) recommended that Cypriot authorities raise the children’s awareness of racial discrimination and equip teachers with the tools to identify and address racism.

Since the fieldwork for this study, race has been given more prominence in the reform agenda, as manifested by the introduction to all schools of the Code of Conduct against Racism & Guide to Management and Recording of Racist Incidents (henceforth, Code against Racism) (Papamichael & Zembylas, 2015) in 2015-2016. This Code aims at assisting schools in the prevention, identification and elimination of discrimination and the development of an anti-racist culture.

This Code was created in response to ECRI's (2007) General Policy Recommendation No 10 on Combatting Racism and Racial Discrimination in and through School Education to all EU member states. It is also in alignment with several international and European treaties Cyprus has signed (see MoEC's webpage on the Code against Racism).

However, the ways in which supranational policies are interpreted at the local level and enacted in schools is mediated by the specific national context. In Cyprus, as explained so far, contradictory discourses about cultural diversity coexist both at the societal level and at the national education level. This is also evidenced by the purposes of primary education as defined on the MoEC website. On the one hand, there is the traditional emphasis on Hellenocentrism:

A basic responsibility of Primary Education is to help pupils become acquainted with and love their national heritage and to realise their national identity: the Greek language, the Greek Orthodox religion and the history, the culture and the tradition of our place. (my translation)

On the other hand, there is an emphasis on the development of a European identity and on interculturalism:

At the same time, there is awareness of its responsibility towards the multicultural trends developing in the modern world through globalization, it supports children in the development of intercultural consciousness, nurturing acceptance and respect of the difference of the members of other ethnic groups. Furthermore, Primary Education works towards the harmonious coexistence of all school pupils regardless of differences in ethnicity or cultural background.

Especially, nowadays, when Cyprus is an official EU member, it is self-evident that in Primary Education significant work is done, so that young learners can become aware of their identity as European citizens from a very young age. (my translation)

The conflicting ideologies of Hellenocentrism and interculturalism underpinning the competing goals presented above reflect the tension between the political purpose of nation-building that education has traditionally served and the purpose it is expected to serve in response to global 'multicultural trends' and to EU requirements. This tension is also reflected in the MoEC-defined educational

objectives of ‘I don’t forget’ and ‘Developing active citizenship emphasizing social solidarity’ for the school year 2013-2014, when the fieldwork for this study took place.

Despite the reform efforts, teacher education for intercultural education has been considered insufficient (Hajisoteriou & Angelides, 2013; MIPEX, 2014). There are no obligatory modules on intercultural education in the undergraduate Primary Education programme at the University of Cyprus, from which many Greek-Cypriot teachers graduate. In-service training on intercultural education is provided by the Pedagogical Institute of Cyprus in the form of voluntary seminars that take place once or twice per year (Hajisoteriou & Angelides, 2013). Hence, teachers have not necessarily been equipped with the tools to engage with the reform in the direction of intercultural education and may be left alone to respond to the tensions and ambiguities in the policy discourse.

Having presented the political, historical, sociocultural and national education context, in which the research participants operate, the next section critically reviews the intercultural education policy in Cyprus and the guidelines teachers have been provided with. This will enable a deeper understanding of intercultural education policy enactments in the case study schools.

1.4 Review of the Intercultural Education Policy

Intercultural education is a relatively new concept in Greek-Cypriot education and society (Panayiotopoulos & Nicolaidou, 2007; Zembylas, 2012). Although there has been a shift in the intercultural education policy discourse since 2008, the key elements of the policy since its emergence in 2002 will be reviewed, as most of them still apply.

In 2002, the MoEC introduced the rhetoric of intercultural education to schools through its circular entitled ‘Intercultural Education and Schooling’, whereby it presented multiculturalism as a new social reality in Cyprus:

During the last decade, the Cypriot society, which until recently had a relatively homogeneous composition with basically Greek-Orthodox population, experiences intensely the consequences of the massive arrival of alien workers and fellow Greek-Pontians from the former USSR. Among the consequences is also the continuing growth of the number of other-language-speaking children enrolled in our schools. (MoEC, 2002, p.1)

The alleged homogeneity of the Cypriot society indicates non-recognition of the historical existence of cultural diversity on the island and of the existing power inequalities among the indigenous ethnic groups. Accordingly, intercultural education was presented not as an educational approach that targeted all pupils, but as a solution to the recent problem of ‘other-language-speaking’ children (Zembylas, 2010a). The use of terms like ‘other-language-speaking’ and ‘alien’ have been criticized for emphasizing the binary division between ‘us’ and ‘them’, between insiders and outsiders, between normalized and deviant, sustaining, thus, and reinforcing power inequalities (ibid.).

Like in other parts of the world (see Batelaan, 2004), the intercultural education policy in Cyprus has focused primarily on measures for the language support of migrant pupils and for their smooth integration into the education system and society (Vrasidas, Themistokleous & Zembylas, 2009).

Language support measures still constitute the main focus of the intercultural education policy and refer to the teaching of Greek as an additional language (GAL). A mainstreaming model is implemented, namely ‘other-language-speaking’ pupils attend mainstream classrooms, from which they are removed twice a week for 40 minutes to attend GAL lessons. These lessons are provided for up to 2 years in mainstream schools, depending on whether the pupils have been placed in a beginners’ or non-beginners’ group. These sessions are usually taught by teachers who have no specialization in second language or bilingual education. Optional in-service training is provided by the Pedagogical Institute. The teaching material is selected by the teacher who can draw material from MoEC-recommended software and websites or from books provided by Greece, promoting, thus, the Greek culture. These language support measures have been criticized for promoting cultural assimilation through linguistic homogenization

(Panayiotopoulos & Nicolaidou, 2007; Hajisoteriou & Angelides, 2013). Making no reference to the pupils' home languages, they treat these children's 'other' languages as a deficiency rather than as a resource. This seems to suggest a lack of understanding on the part of the MoEC of the potential benefits of bilingual education both for indigenous and migrant children (Panayiotopoulos & Nicolaidou, 2007; Zembylas, 2010a).

Measures for the smooth integration of migrant pupils refer to a celebration of diversity through cultural festivals, dances, food and other ways of promoting migrant children's cultural identities. Such activities are expected to:

contribute to the foregrounding of the other-language-speaking children's culture and civilization and to their easier acceptance by the native children and their parents, as well as to the fight against xenophobia and any racist tendencies. (MoEC, 2002, p. 10)

Approaches that focus solely on the celebration of diversity have been critiqued for essentialising, exoticising and reifying group identities, reinforcing, thus, binarisms, such as 'us' versus 'them' (see Fraser, 2000; Portera, 2008), rather than contributing to the cultivation of acceptance and elimination of xenophobia and racism, as suggested by the Ministry. Moreover, by grounding intercultural education in culture, such approaches divert attention from structural constraints, material inequalities and the redistribution of resources (Fraser, 2000; May & Sleeter, 2010). Thus, they may perpetuate unequal power relations and social injustices.

In 2003-2004, the MoEC initiated the Zones of Educational Priority (ZEP). Following the model of Zones d'Education Prioritaire in France, the ZEPs are networks of schools in socially and economically disadvantaged areas. Each network consists of a secondary school and all the primary and nursery schools in the same catchment area. In line with the EU priorities regarding the promotion of economic and social cohesion in its member states, the goals of the ZEPs are: to minimize early school dropout, school failure and delinquency; to promote social cohesion; and to prevent social marginalization and exclusion (MoEC, 2014) through positive discrimination in favour of disadvantaged pupils. ZEP schools

receive additional support by means of: increased funding for activities in the morning school and for free afternoon and evening classes; smaller class sizes; free breakfast; and extra time for Greek language support (Hajisoteriou & Angelides, 2013; PPMI, 2013). In addition, ZEP schools are expected to build partnerships with parents and the communities (Hajisoteriou & Angelides, 2013; PPMI, 2013). They also cooperate with Centres for Information and the Psycho-social Support of Pupils, which organize workshops for pupils, parents and / or teachers. Thus, the ZEP programme seems to move beyond language learning and celebration of diversity and provide resources and space for the local development of a more meaningful response to the needs of the pupil population.

However, the ZEP programme also has some limitations. For example, a single school cannot join the programme. All nursery and primary schools from which a secondary school derives its pupils need to consent for the creation of a Zone of Educational Priority. As a result, several schools with a highly diverse population, like one of the participant schools, St Lazarus school, are not members of a ZEP and do not receive this additional support (Vrasidas, Themistokleous & Zembylas, 2009). Moreover, although the ZEP programme aims at the social inclusion of disadvantaged pupils and, according to MoEC (2009), is part of its “effort to promote tolerance and dialogue” and “eliminate stereotypes”, ZEP schools seem to have become ghettos, which white, middle-class, Greek-Cypriot pupils avoid (Zembylas, 2010a; Hajisoteriou & Angelides, 2013). Consequently, instead of achieving the aforementioned goals, ZEP schools seem to sustain the disadvantaged pupils’ marginalization.

The measures taken by the MoEC for the promotion of intercultural education were critiqued by the Educational Reform Committee (2004) as targeting mainly migrant pupils and their ‘language deficiency’, while issues of nationalism, racism and intolerance remained unaddressed (Zembylas & Iasonos, 2010). However, the pressure exerted on Cyprus by European institutions, such as the ECRI and the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia, to abandon monoculturalism and adopt more inclusive and multicultural approaches

(Hajisoteriou, Neophytou & Angelides, 2012) and the wider educational reform seem to have contributed to shifts in the intercultural education policy discourse.

While the terms multicultural and intercultural education were initially used interchangeably, since 2008 the rhetoric of intercultural education and inclusion has been officially adopted by the MoEC as the most appropriate educational approach to immigration (Hajisoteriou & Angelides, 2013). In 2008, the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, the MoEC introduced a new policy on intercultural education (Hajisoteriou & Angelides, 2016a). This policy, which is still in effect, aims at the migrants' inclusion in Greek-Cypriot education and society, the success of all pupils in education and the elimination of stereotypes and prejudices, suggesting, thus, an effort to promote social justice (Hajisoteriou & Angelides, 2015, 2016).

However, intercultural education remains ill-defined (Hajisoteriou & Angelides, 2013, 2016) and emphasis is still placed on the teaching of, and teacher training for, Greek as an additional language. Moreover, the MoEC still refers to the knowledge of other cultures rather than cultural interaction (Hajisoteriou & Angelides, 2015), so constructing cultural diversity as a migrant condition rather than as a sociocultural condition (Gregoriou, 2009). It can be argued that culture is still understood as static and intercultural education is constructed as a tool to deal with the cultural diversity of migrant pupils, rather than as a tool to prepare all pupils to live and work in a multicultural world. Moreover, there is no reference to systemic changes which could enable the inclusion of migrant pupils. For example, there is no space in the education system for the recognition of minority ethnic groups' linguistic and cultural capital. Their home languages are not taught in school and their religions are not acknowledged. Therefore, it has been suggested that, despite the adoption of the terminology, in practice '*symbolic* interculturalist (or *covert* multiculturalist) policies' were developed and implemented, which aimed at celebrating cultural differences and eventually, retaining the Greek-Cypriot identity (Hajisoteriou, Neophytou & Angelides, 2012, p. 397 – emphasis in the original). As Hajisoteriou and Angelides (2016a) argue, Cyprus' intercultural education policy has been significantly influenced by the

unresolved political conflict and the country's membership of international and European organisations, such as the EU, the CoE, the UN and UNESCO. As they suggest, Cyprus chose to comply with the intercultural goals specified by these organisations primarily for political reasons, namely in an attempt 'to gain recognition of its sovereignty by restoring the human rights of its citizens' (p. 241). However, policies "without an authentic endorsement of key values, tend to rely on coercion rather than commitment in their implementation-and they can be superficial" (Rudduck & Flutter, 2004, pp.101).

At the beginning of the school year 2013-2014, the MoEC sent a new circular on Intercultural Education and Schooling to all schools (F:7.1.19.1/16, 3 September 2013). This circular suggests the emergence of a more coordinated effort to support the implementation of intercultural education. For example, it announced the establishment of a committee, whose purpose is to study and monitor the implementation of intercultural education and support primary schools and teachers. Moreover, it promulgated the MoEC's intention to create a webpage for Intercultural Education and Schooling, which became available at the end of the school year. Despite the suggested efforts for a more coordinated approach, the meaning of intercultural education remains unclear, as competing discourses with different ideological underpinnings were evident in the circular. On the one hand, intercultural education was presented as an approach that needs to permeate the school ethos, promote quality education for all pupils, and help them develop values, skills and knowledge that will assist them in pursuing justice in their everyday lives. On the other hand, the repeated emphasis on the linguistic and social integration of other-language-speaking pupils, evidenced in the biggest part of this circular, indicates the continuing prevalence of the discourse that portrays intercultural education as targeted support for 'other-language-speaking' pupils. The circular portrays cultural diversity as a resource and, at the same time, as needing to be managed by the schools, in other words, as a problem. In both cases, diversity is depicted as a feature of 'other-language-speaking' pupils, without, thus, considering the diversity within the indigenous population. Thus, the 'us versus them' divide is sustained and reinforced. The contradictory messages

regarding the meaning of intercultural education and diversity in this circular indicate the transitional stage the Greek-Cypriot education system is currently at.

A shift towards a more consistent anti-racist approach is reflected in the Code against Racism (Papamichael & Zembylas, 2015), which was issued after the end of the fieldwork for this study. The Code acknowledges the existence of multiple forms of diversity, such as ethnicity, skin colour, language, religion, culture, socioeconomic status, gender, sexual orientation, age and disability. It presents diversity as an asset that ‘enriches the education system’ (Papamichael & Zembylas, 2015, p. 8) and identity and race as socially constructed, challenging, thus, essentialised and reified views of identity that sustain stereotypes and prejudices. Moreover, it highlights that, unless institutional discrimination is addressed, even intercultural or antiracist education may sustain racist stereotypes. Hence, a political, transformative version of intercultural education, which challenges structural inequalities, seems to be emerging.

However, the policy process is not linear and top-down, but complex, dynamic and context-contingent (Scott, 2000; Ball, Maguire & Braun, 2012). The Greek-Cypriot teachers’ resistance to the MoEC-defined policy initiative regarding the development of ‘a culture of peaceful coexistence’ between the Greek-Cypriots and the Turkish-Cypriots in 2008-2009 illustrates that teachers resist policies that either conflict with their deep-rooted beliefs and ideologies or are perceived as too risky (Charalambous, Charalambous & Zembylas, 2013). The MoEC urges schools to act autonomously, to develop a shared school philosophy and their own intercultural education policies and action plans (see F:7.1.19.1/16, 3 September 2013). It also encourages teachers and schools with similar profiles to form partnerships to exchange experiences, views and best practices and invites them to share good practices on the intercultural education webpage. Consequently, the MoEC appears to treat teachers as professionals rather than as mere technicians who are expected to implement an externally imposed intercultural education policy. However, whether and the extent to which teachers achieve agency in taking intercultural education forward and how they enact the intercultural education policy depend on a number of factors, which are explored in chapter 3.

1.5 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the recent historical, political and economic developments in Cyprus, which have provided the backdrop against which contemporary constructions of diversity in Greek-Cypriot society and education system and constructions of intercultural education in the policy discourse have been examined.

The Greek-Cypriot society and education system seem to currently be at a transitional stage, as regards constructions of diversity. Competing discourses underpinned by opposing ideologies, namely Hellenocentrism and interculturalism, coexist in Greek-Cypriot society. The tension between these discourses is reflected in the educational policy discourse, as evidenced by the conflicting representations of intercultural education and diversity in the most recent intercultural education circular.

Nevertheless, the translation of policies into practice may be influenced by both the context and the practitioners' beliefs, prior experiences, knowledge and understandings (Scott, 2000; Ball, Maguire & Braun, 2012; Priestley, Biesta & Robinson, 2015). This chapter has presented the macro- and meso-levels, namely the national political, historical, economic, sociocultural and local educational context in which the case study schools operate. Before turning to the micro-level - in other words, the school level - the next chapter discusses the various debates in the literature regarding the meaning of intercultural education and key theoretical ideas related to it.

Chapter 2 Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

This chapter critically discusses the concept of intercultural education and the key theoretical issues related to it with a view to developing a theoretical framework for this study. It begins by providing a brief history of intercultural education and problematizing this concept. It then analyses some of the main theoretical issues pertaining to intercultural education and concludes by locating this thesis in relation to the theoretical ideas and debates presented.

2.1 Brief History of Intercultural Education

The term ‘intercultural education’ was first used in 1935 in the USA to describe educational approaches that developed in response to the rise in xenophobic sentiments and attitudes ensuing the inflow of large numbers of ethnically and religiously diverse migrants in the late 19th and early 20th century (McGee Banks, 2004). Intercultural education, which took place both in schools and in the community, focused on the migrants and issues relating to ethnic and religious diversity (ibid.). However, a lack of consensus among intercultural educators about the purpose, direction, implementation and audience of intercultural education resulted in the development of different approaches that could be traced along a continuum that ranged from assimilation to cultural pluralism (ibid.). In the 1940s, the term ‘intercultural education’ was replaced with the term ‘intergroup education’, which described similar educational efforts but with greater emphasis on similarities rather than differences among groups and on the reduction of prejudice and discrimination (ibid.).

During the period of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s, ‘multiethnic education’ emerged in the USA in response to African Americans’ and other ethnic groups’ demands that ethnic studies were added to the curriculum, so that the histories and cultures of specific ethnic groups were studied (Banks, 2006).

Following the example of the Black Civil Rights movement, other marginalized groups, such as women, people with disabilities and gay people, demanded that educational institutions ‘respond[ed] to their cultural needs, hopes, and dreams’ (Banks, 2006, p. 9). Accordingly, the term ‘multicultural education’ gradually replaced ‘multiethnic education’ to reflect the needs and concerns of a wider range of groups, rather than solely ethnic groups (ibid., pp. 9-10). In the 1970s, multicultural education was also introduced in Canada, in Australia and was adopted by the Council of Europe (Portera, 2008).

Although multicultural education has been conceptualized in many different ways (see McLaren, 1995; Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997; Banks, 2006; May & Sleeter, 2010), Gorski (2006) identifies the following shared principles underlying the conceptualisations of key theorists in the field (e.g. Sleeter, 1996; Grant & Sleeter, 1998; Nieto, 2000; and Banks, 2004):

1. Multicultural education is a political movement and process that attempts to secure social justice for historically and presently underserved students.
2. Multicultural education recognizes that, while some individual classroom practices are consistent with multicultural education philosophies, social justice is an institutional matter and as such, can be secured only through comprehensive school reform.
3. Multicultural education insists that comprehensive school reform can be achieved only through a critical analysis of systems of power and privilege.
4. The underlying goal of multicultural education—the purpose of this critical analysis—is the elimination of educational inequities.
5. Multicultural education is good education for all students. (pp. 164-165)

These principles underline the political and transformative potential of multicultural education. However, conceptualizations and practices of multicultural education have most often fallen short of achieving these goals, as they tend to reflect an add-on approach to existing educational systems, leaving, thus, power inequalities and institutional discrimination unaddressed (Ladson-Billings, 2004 [1998]; Gaine, 2005; Banks, 2006; Gillborn, 2008; Gorski, 2008; Portera, 2008; May & Sleeter, 2010).

In Europe, in 1970 the Council of Europe passed its first resolution regarding the education of migrant children in the member states, which focused on their integration in schools and the preservation of their home languages and cultures (Portera, 2011). Northern and western European countries, such as Britain, France and the Netherlands, had been experiencing extensive immigration flows since the end of World War II (Gundara, 2000; Portera, 2011). As Gundara (2000) notes, '[m]ost of the European countries wanted labour to come and work in the country of immigration-but not settle' (p. 109). Therefore, processes of "systematic institutionalized discrimination" were employed to prevent their settlement (ibid.). Nationality became one of the markers of difference which, on the grounds of 'myths and memories of communal history, a common public culture, common laws and customs, [and] a historic territory or homeland' (Smith, 2002, p. 17), has served to include certain groups and exclude others, such as the migrant workers from ex-colonies and countries peripheralised through imperialism (Gundara, 2000).

In this context of sociocultural, economic and political changes, in the mid-1980s, the Council of Europe shifted the focus of the educational projects it promoted from 'multicultural' to 'intercultural' education (Portera, 2008). This shift took place at a time of severe critique of multicultural education, constructions of which fell short of achieving the goals of the aforementioned politicized approach to multicultural education. On the one hand, anti-racist scholars criticized it for its emphasis on culture and on curricular reform and its failure to address structural inequalities and the issue of racism (May, 1999; May & Sleeter, 2010). On the other hand, multicultural education was attacked by nationalists, who argued that schools should transmit only the language, the culture, the religion and the values of the state (Coulby, 2006).

While the terminological shift from 'multicultural' to 'intercultural' education addressed none of the aforementioned critiques of multicultural education, it seemed to offer a new beginning. In fact, it has been positively commented upon by several scholars (e.g. Rey, 1996; Bleszynska, 2008; Portera, 2008, 2011; Maniatis, 2012) for moving away from mere description of distinct cultures to the

dynamic view of cultures in interaction. This shift has been underlined by supranational institutions, as well:

Multicultural education uses learning about other cultures in order to produce acceptance, or at least tolerance, of these cultures. Intercultural education aims to go beyond passive coexistence, to achieve a developing and sustainable way of living together in multicultural societies through the creation of understanding of, respect for, and dialogue between the different cultural groups. (UNESCO, 2006, p. 18)

However, the terminological shift has been received with some scepticism by some scholars. For example, Aman (2013) expresses his doubts whether this terminological shift actually reflects a paradigm shift or a shift at the conceptual level. Coulby (2006) suggests that the term intercultural may ‘serve to disguise the historical realities of most cultural interaction’, which ‘far from positive intercultural reciprocity or hybridity, these have been much more commonly characterized by conquest, slave trades, imperialism and genocide’ (p. 247).

This raises questions about the rationale underlying the adoption and continuing promotion of the term by the Council of Europe and the European Commission, given the absence of a universally agreed definition and theoretical framework (Aguado & Malik, 2006; Gundara & Portera, 2008; Dunne, 2011; Portera, 2011). The preference of ‘intercultural education’ over other approaches, such as anti-racist education or critical multicultural education, both of which emerged as responses to the limitations of liberal multicultural education (May & Sleeter, 2010), could be attributed to a number of reasons. As both anti-racist education and critical multicultural education directly challenge the status quo and social injustices, focusing on racism and on the intersection of various forms of inequities, respectively (ibid.), they could have an intimidating effect and might lead to the resistance of member-states to adopt them. Therefore, intercultural education might have been preferred as a ‘softer’ term. It could also be argued that the ambiguity of the concept of intercultural education and the lack of accountability measures allow a high degree of flexibility and variation in the construction of intercultural educational approaches to dealing with cultural diversity and thus, make it easy for member-states to subscribe to intercultural

education. It may also be suggested that this terminological shift may have served to suggest a paradigm shift from the essentialism and objectivism characterizing modernity to the anti-essentialism and social constructionism characterizing postmodernity. Thus, it could give the impression of opening up new possibilities for the deconstruction and transformation of oppressive social relations and for the promotion of social justice, which liberal multicultural education had largely failed to achieve. Nevertheless, if its focus remained merely on culture, this approach would eventually sustain structural inequalities, institutional discrimination and Eurocentrism.

Despite the ambiguity surrounding the concept of intercultural education, there has been an increasing interest in this approach mainly in Europe, especially in the new migrant host countries, like Spain, Portugal, Italy, Greece and Cyprus, which, since the 1980s, have turned from countries experiencing emigration to countries receiving migrants mainly from Eastern Europe and the southern hemisphere. The absence of a universally agreed definition and theoretical framework of intercultural education; the lack of evidence of how it could be practically applied (Gundara & Portera, 2008); and the different political, historical, economic and sociocultural conditions in different contexts have led to several different understandings and practices of intercultural education (Bleszynska, 2008; Gundara & Portera, 2008; Aguado & Malik, 2011).

In the literature, the term ‘intercultural education’ is sometimes used interchangeably with the term ‘multicultural education’, while other times the two terms are used to refer to two distinct approaches (Coulby, 2006; Gundara & Portera, 2008; Bleszynska, 2011; Portera, 2011). Drawing a parallel with the distinction between ‘liberal multiculturalism’ and ‘critical multiculturalism’ (May & Sleeter, 2010), the different understandings and practices of intercultural education can be traced along a continuum between two broad frameworks, which are encapsulated by Gorski’s (2006) distinction between the ‘conservatized, depoliticised’ version and the ‘political, transformative’ version of intercultural education. ‘Critical intercultural education’ is another term used by Maniatis (2012) to refer to the latter.

The conservatized version of intercultural education is described as ‘a conservative reframing of multicultural education that focuses not on eliminating educational inequities, but on human relations and celebrating diversity’ (Gorski, 2006, p. 163). It attempts to foster an appreciation of diversity through various projects and festivals that aim at familiarising pupils with diverse cultures, while leaving the rest of the curriculum unchanged. It emphasises human relationships and intercultural dialogue but is depoliticised.

The ‘political, transformative’ or ‘critical’ version of intercultural education challenges unequal power relations, institutional discrimination and social injustices and aims at ‘social reconstruction for equity and justice’ (Gorski, 2008, p. 516). For this purpose, it calls for a transformation of educational systems that privilege some students, while they disadvantage others. It is described as a comprehensive educational approach (Aguado & Malik, 2006; Coulby, 2006; UNESCO, 2006; Allemann-Ghionda, 2012; Maniatis, 2012) that needs to permeate all aspects of the educational process-at the macro, meso and micro level- and not to be a simple ‘add-on’ to existing educational systems and processes (Gorski, 2006; UNESCO, 2006; Maniatis, 2012).

In response to the constantly increasing diversity within European societies and the increase in violent extremism and terrorism, in 2015 the European Union Education Ministers and the Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport issued the *Declaration on Promoting Citizenship and the Common Values of Freedom, Tolerance and Non-Discrimination through Education*. Among the priorities they set at the national, regional and local level, they included:

- Ensuring inclusive education for all children and young people which combats racism and discrimination on any ground, promotes citizenship and teaches them to understand and to accept differences of opinion, of conviction, of belief and of lifestyle, while respecting the rule of law, diversity and gender equality;
- Combating geographical, social and educational inequalities...;
- Empowering teachers so that they are able to take an active stand against all forms of discrimination and racism, to educate children and young people in media literacy, to meet the needs of pupils from diverse backgrounds, to impart common fundamental values and to prevent and

combat racism and intolerance. (Informal Meeting of European Union Education Ministers, 2015, p.3)

These objectives seem to be aligned with the goals of, and the values underpinning, the political, transformative version of intercultural education. In order for constructions of I.E. to be grounded in the values of social justice and equity and serve the aforementioned goals, this study suggests that there is a need for conceptual clarity and a clear theoretical framework to guide policy and practice.

The next sections explore some key theoretical ideas that pertain to I.E., namely essentialism, ‘othering’ and ‘the superior Self’, recognition, deconstruction and border crossing.

2.2 Essentialism vs Anti-Essentialism: Moving beyond the Divide

Different conceptualizations of intercultural education are underpinned by different views of culture and identity, which range from essentialist to anti-essentialist perspectives or move beyond this binary division, carrying different implications for the possibility of intercultural education contributing to human liberation from oppression and social reconstruction for justice.

Essentialism refers to ‘the tendency to ascribe our behaviour to “essences” or fixed qualities’ (Thompson, 2003, p. 28). Essentialist notions of culture and identity depict them as fixed, bounded, unitary and deterministic and do not seem to take into account cross-cultural exchanges, shifts over time and space, agency and multiple intersecting identities (Nathan, 2015).

‘Contributions’ and ‘additive’ approaches largely draw from essentialised perspectives resulting in the insertion of cultural elements, such as food, dances, ethnic holidays and heroes/ heroines, and adding ethnic content, concepts and perspectives to the curriculum, respectively (Banks, 2006 [1988]). Such approaches have been critiqued for often resulting in presenting exoticised and folkloristic images of ethnic cultures (see Troyna, 1983; Kincheloe & Steinberg,

1997; Banks, 2006 [1988]; Portera, 2008, 2011), and, thus, essentialising, simplifying and reifying group identities, obscuring intragroup diversity (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997; Fraser, 2000). By promoting essentialised and trivialised images of cultures, these approaches may reinforce and solidify binary divisions between ‘us’ and ‘them’ and hierarchies of superiority and inferiority (see Fraser, 2000; Portera, 2008), which can be used to justify inequalities and sustain the hegemony of the dominant group.

A non-essentialist perspective treats culture and identity as fluid and hybrid rather than fixed and unitary. Cultures and identities are constantly negotiated through interaction and shifting. As Jenkins (2008) notes, identity is not ‘something that simply is’, something fixed and finite. Instead:

Identity can only be understood as a process of ‘being’ or ‘becoming’. One’s identity – one’s identities, indeed, for who we are is always multi-dimensional, singular and plural – is never a final settled matter.” (17)

Like identity, culture is also viewed as fluid and dynamic. The intersection of age, social class, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion and language; the various groups one joins; as well as their cross-cultural personal experiences affect one’s culture, which changes throughout their lives (Nathan, 2015).

Various scholars (e.g. Bleszynska, 2008; Portera, 2008, 2011; Maniatis, 2012) and supranational institutions (e.g. UNESCO, 2006) suggest that the terminological shift from multicultural to intercultural education reflects a shift from essentialist to non-essentialist conceptualisations of culture and identity. It has been suggested that by shifting the focus from static images of cultures to intercultural dialogue, I.E. allows for the acknowledgment of the fluid and dynamic nature of culture and identity (Portera, 2008, 2011). Adopting this dynamic view of culture and identity, there seems to be no cultural homogeneity within either the dominant or minority groups (Rey, 1996; Maniatis, 2012), as we are all different as bearers of unique hybrid cultures and multiple shifting identities. This paradigm shift, as Portera (2008, 2011) suggests, could contribute to the elimination of stereotypes and binarisms, which underpin all sorts of oppression and discrimination and support deficit views of difference.

However, despite the shift from a modernist, essentialist to a postmodern, dynamic view of culture and identity suggested by the focus of intercultural education on the interaction among cultures, its grounding in culture and the underlying assumption of unconstrained human agency render it vulnerable to the critiques of liberal multicultural education by anti-racist, CRT (Critical Race Theory) and critical multiculturalist scholars for depoliticisation and decontextualisation and ensuing failure to address persistent power and structural inequalities (see Troyna, 1984; Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997; May & Sleeter, 2010). In fact, cultural interaction has been evidenced in historical processes, like wars, conquests, empire-building, slave trade and mass migration and in the historical presence of national linguistic, religious and cultural minorities in various European countries (Coulby, 2006; Catarci, 2014). However, in most cases, this interaction did not take place on equal terms and did not lead to ‘parity of participation’, which, according to Fraser (2009), is one definition of justice. For example, although, as Said (1993) observes, empire-building has contributed to the hybridity of cultures, essentialist conceptions of culture were employed by colonial powers for the creation of hierarchies and the sustenance of unequal power relations and domination through processes of negative representation, discrimination, marginalisation and exclusion of the cultures of the colonized people (Said, 1978, 1993; Grosfoguel, 2004). Similarly, McLaren (1997) notes that:

At the same time that the contributions of minority groups are absorbed by the dominant culture, the dominant culture presents itself as a distinctly white social order into which minority groups are invited to adjust themselves through an assimilation into whiteness. (p. x)

Interaction among cultures, thus, does not seem to suffice for the elimination of binarisms and countering oppression, as long as unequal power relations and structural inequalities remain unacknowledged and unchallenged.

Critical multiculturalism proposes a contextualised and politicised conceptualisation of culture and identity that moves beyond the binary division between, on the one hand, determinism and essentialism and, on the other hand, unconstrained human agency and anti-essentialism. Focusing on the analysis of the ways in which power operates, critical multiculturalists view culture and

identity “as multi-layered, fluid, complex, and encompassing multiple social categories”, but at the same time grounded in a specific political, economic and sociocultural context (May & Sleeter, 2010, p. 10)

By taking into account the role of culture, critical multiculturalism extends beyond Giddens’ (1984) structuration theory, which focuses on the interplay between agency and structure and reflects what Thompson (2003) refers to as the “‘double dialectic’ of agency, culture and structure”, where culture referring to “the domain of shared meaning and symbolic systems” is understood as a mediator between agency and social structure (p. 38-39). As Thompson (2003) argues, ideological processes at the cultural level affect the way social structures are experienced by individuals, groups and communities and influence agency.

The politicised and contextualised understanding of culture and identity within the framework of the “‘double dialectic’ of agency, culture and structure” seems more promising for the elimination of discrimination, inequities and injustices, as it will become clearer in the next section that turns to a discussion of constructions of the Self and the Other underpinning different approaches to cultural diversity.

2.3 ‘Othering’ and ‘the Superior Self’

This section discusses different constructions of the relation between the Self and the Other – the culturally different one – which underpin different educational approaches to cultural diversity and carry different implications for the possibility of promoting social justice and equity in education and beyond.

‘Contributions’ and ‘additive’ approaches that focus on the celebration of diversity tend to emphasise difference. This focus solely on difference seems to reflect the assumption that “[t]he recognition of ‘us’ hinges mainly upon our not being ‘them’” (Jenkins, 2008, p. 20). Thus, it seems to sustain and reinforce ‘othering’, namely the identification of the Self in contrast to the Other, which, according to psychoanalytic models, is key to the creation of a coherent sense of Self

(MacQuarrie, 2010), but, according to critical theorists, creates binary divisions of ‘us’ and ‘them’ that serve to legitimise structural inequalities, as is explained below.

‘Othering’ is a term that emerged in postmodern analyses of the postcolonial world (MacQuarrie, 2010). In his seminal books *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism*, Said explains how the Europeans’ production and reproduction of an essentialist, reified, reductionist and dehumanised image of the non-Western world presented as a universal truth, and the definition of Europe in opposition to it has facilitated the establishment of the unquestioned superiority of Western culture and knowledge over those of the colonised peoples. This, in turn, has served to justify the Western colonising project portrayed as a civilising mission (Said, 1993; Holliday, 2011). This ‘civilizing violence’ involved “the destruction of native knowledges and the imprinting of ‘true’, civilised knowledge” (Santos, Nunes, & Meneses, 2007, p. xxxvi), which served to sustain Western hegemonic power over the colonised people. Hence, knowledge is inextricably linked with power (Said, 1978). The Western construction and reconstruction of the non-Western world within the deficit discourse of Orientalism (or ‘othering’) has had such a pervasive influence on thought and action, and was so deeply ingrained in institutions and in everyday life (Said, 1978) that, although direct colonialism is over, several scholars (e.g. Said, 1978, 1993; Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997; Grosfoguel, 2004; Santos, Nunes, & Meneses, 2007; Holliday, 2011) argue that othering still underpins certain political, economic, social and cultural practices and is implicated in social relations, sustaining the hegemony of the West.

Othering, thus, as illustrated above, involves ‘constructing, or imagining, a demonized image of “them” or the Other, which supports an idealised image of “us”, or the Self’ (Holliday, 2011, p. 69). It is a process of stigmatisation and commodification of the Other (MacQuarrie, 2010; Holliday, 2011) performed by the dominant group, which has the power to make its own worldviews hegemonic in a society. Othering can be performed along any of the axes of people’s identities, namely race, gender, class, ethnicity, nationality, religion, language, sexual orientation, age and disability, and may also be related to issues of morality

and normality, namely 'deserving' vs. 'undeserving' – on the basis of lifestyle - and 'normal' vs. 'abnormal' (Jenkins, 2008). Treating the Other as a monolithic object, othering generates a binary division of 'us' and 'them' based on the reification of 'our' 'proficient and ['their'] deficient values, artefacts and behaviours' (Holiday, 2011, p. 70). Systematic and consistent institutionally established negative cultural representations of certain groups aim at affecting policies, public perceptions and practices in ways that will sustain unequal power relations and justify inequalities, while excluding, marginalising or exploiting these groups (for examples see Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997; Gundara, 2000; Sivanandan, 2001; Gorski, 2008). These systemic inequities are often hidden under the guise of a 'morality of helping' the culturally, morally or intellectually deficient Other by educating, 'civilizing' and improving or 'fixing' them (Holliday, 2011). This 'morality of helping' them seems to contribute to the unquestioning acceptance and taken-for-grantedness of the essentialist negative assumptions about the Other and the superiority of the Self; to disguising the underpinning imperialistic project; to creating a relationship of dependence between the 'benefactor' and the 'deficient' one; and, thus, sustaining the privilege and hegemony of the dominant group. Othering is, thus, a tool used for control and domination and has served a variety of political and economic forces, such as Western imperialism, capitalism (see Gorski, 2008) and exclusive nationalism (see Gundara, 2000). In conflict-ridden contexts, like Cyprus, the conflicting sites commonly employ othering to justify their positions and use education to perpetuate the us-and-them divide (Davies, 2004; Zembylas, 2008, 2012).

Besides contributing to the construction of borders between 'us' and 'them' and of hierarchies, this understanding of the Self - 'us' - in opposition to the Other - 'them' - is not helpful for combatting oppression and social injustices also because it does not take into account the intersection of inequalities along the various axes of individuals' multiple identities, such as racism, sexism, classism and other forms of discrimination. For example, defining white people as the privileged ones in opposition to black people would overlook the diversity within whiteness and the disadvantage experienced by white working-class children (Rattansi, 1992; Gillborn, 2004). In addition, this binary opposition between the Self and the Other

does not seem to account for the possibility of the commodified, dehumanised and oppressed Other acting as the coloniser and the oppressor of other Others. As Jackson (1997) notes, “[o]ppressed men...can still oppress women; oppressed white women still oppress black women, and so on” (p. 464). Hence, this definition of the Self in opposition to the Other seems to facilitate obscuring and sustaining the multiple dimensions of discrimination operating at different levels.

Critical multiculturalist theorists (e.g. Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997) have criticized ‘contributions’ and ‘additive’ approaches for leaving the universalization and centrality of the Eurocentric (or Western) perspective permeating the curriculum unchallenged. By promoting stereotypical, essentialised and exoticised images of diverse cultures and group identities, as viewed through the unacknowledged, supposedly objective and neutral lens of the Eurocentric norm, such approaches may contribute to othering these groups and thus, to further entrenching their marginal position in the curriculum, in school and in society (ibid.). As a result, misconceptions about these groups (Banks, 2006 [1988]) and the superiority of Western cultures may be reinforced (Mitchell, 2012), perpetuating, thus, Western hegemony. Therefore, such approaches have been criticized for being tokenistic (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997; see Gillborn, 2004),

Educational approaches that do not emphasise difference seem to avoid essentialist constructions of the Other and the creation of borders between ‘us’ and ‘them’ – at least, in theory. For example, apparently influenced by the emphasis on reflexivity in late modernity (see Beck, Giddens & Lash, 1994), Portera (2008; 2011) suggests that intercultural education, being underpinned by a postmodern understanding of culture and identity, does not treat otherness as a threat or a problem to be fixed. Instead, the interaction with the Other provides an opportunity for reflection on values, norms, behaviours, ways of thinking; for cultural enrichment and growth. Furthermore, educational approaches based on cosmopolitan theories underline our common humanity and interconnectedness, emphasising, thus, the similarities among individuals rather than differences. Such approaches are often cited as ‘trans-cultural education’ (Portera, 2008), but are

also encountered in versions of liberal multicultural education and conservatized intercultural education that focus on human relations. Their purpose is to help children develop a commitment to cosmopolitan values, such as human rights, peace and social justice, and become global citizens (see Portera, 2008; Banks, 2011).

Both the emphasis on reflexivity and the development of the common universal values mentioned above and of global citizenship represent worthwhile causes to pursue through education and could contribute to the promotion of social justice. However, the depoliticised and decontextualized character of both kinds of approaches does not seem to enable them to deconstruct existing borders between ‘us’ and ‘them’ and hierarchies (see Gorski, 2008), as explained below.

Intercultural dialogue based on assumed but unrealistic equal status has been found to support rather than undermine domination and colonisation (Aikman, 1997; Gorski, 2008). Evidence suggests that it may lead to ‘silenced dialogue’ (Delpit, 1995), whereby the views of less powerful groups are disregarded; to a temporary change of attitudes towards out-group members, which may not generalize beyond the contact situation or beyond the specific individuals to the whole outgroup (Pettigrew, 2004); or even to increase in prejudice (ibid.). This evidence seems to confirm Allport’s (1954) intergroup contact theory, which suggests that intergroup contact may reduce prejudice and enhance intergroup relations provided that specific conditions are met, among which the “equal status ...[of] majority and minority groups” (p. 281). Hence, by leaving the unequal status of the interlocutors unacknowledged, intercultural dialogue may sustain or even reinforce negative constructions of the Other, supporting and, thus, reifying existing social hierarchies.

Similarly, educational approaches that focus exclusively on similarities have been criticized for contributing to the perpetuation of structural inequalities, by diverting attention from unequal power relations, material inequalities and the ways in which social categories, such as race, class and gender, structure individuals’ experiences (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997; May & Sleeter, 2010). As

Santos, Nunes, & Meneses (2007) stress, “denial of diversity is a constitutive and persistent feature of colonialism” (p. xxxiii). Hence, despite good intentions, such ‘trans-cultural’ approaches, following the example of the supposedly neutral, objective, timeless and trans-cultural modern Western education, may result in being a new form of Western colonization and domination (Portera, 2008).

Several theorists (e.g. Levinas, 1979; Derrida, 1984; Jenkins, 2008) have moved beyond the disjunction of focusing exclusively on either difference or similarity. Derrida’s work on the deconstruction of Western metaphysics and specifically, the concept of *différance*, which means both to ‘differ’ and to ‘defer’ (Derrida, 1984, p. 105), allows a re-conceptualization of otherness that moves beyond the boundaries created by the aforementioned disjunction. Through his deconstruction of the modern Western notion of identity, Derrida reveals that the Other, who is concealed, suppressed or excluded, so that the myth of the original, pure and timeless Self is sustained, is actually constitutive of the Self (Biesta, 2009c). As Derrida suggests, “identity presupposes alterity” (as cited in Biesta, 2009c, p. 27). Similarly, Jenkins (2008) underlines that:

Defining ‘us’ involves defining a range of ‘thems’ also...Similarity and difference reflect each other across a shared boundary. At the boundary, we discover what we are in what we are not, and vice versa.” (p. 102)

This emphasis on the interdependence between the Self and the Other allows the re-conceptualisation of the relationship between the Self and the Other, which are no longer viewed in opposition but in mutual presupposition. This understanding of the Self and the Other as being different but, at the same time, interconnected seems to enable the move beyond binary divides that suggest that one way of being and doing is normal, superior, human, while the other is deviant, inferior and sub-human or non-human.

Furthermore, the emphasis on the interdependence between the Self and the Other seems to provide a useful framework to engage with the political and ethical goals of social justice and equity. As Jenkins (2008) suggests, understanding similarity and difference as inextricably linked features of identities enables us to address issues of “collective belonging, collective disadvantage and ...the relationship

between the freedom to be different, on the one hand, and equality and collective responsibility on the other”, which focusing on recognition only of difference – or only of commonalities, I would add - does not allow. Such an understanding of the relation between the Self and the Other seems, thus, to be in line with emancipatory forms of multiculturalism, which, as described by authors from the global South (e.g. Santos, Nunes, & Meneses, 2007), are premised on “the recognition of difference, and of the right to difference and the coexistence or construction of a common way of life that extends beyond the various types of differences” (ibid, p. xxv).

However, as identities are understood as socially constructed in interaction and institutionally (Jenkins, 2008), in order to pursue the political and ethical goals of social justice and equity through education, it seems essential to analyse constructions of the Self and the Other in specific historical, socio-cultural, political and economic contexts to understand the ways in which power relations in each context influence and shape these constructions (Gorski, 2008; May & Sleeter, 2010). As social institutions, schools tend to reproduce the often oppressive social relations prevailing in many Western societies. However, as Biesta (2009c) suggests, ‘For education not to be unjust, some form of recognition of the other as other is needed.’ (p. 34). The next section turns to a discussion of different approaches to recognition in relation to their potential contribution to social justice and equity.

2.4 Recognition

Since the Black Civil Rights Movement in the US in the 1960s, several liberation movements have arisen worldwide, through which oppressed groups, such as women, ethnic minorities, LGBT and disabled people, raise public awareness of their experiences of oppression and demand recognition.

Within the politics of universalism, recognition refers to the respect of ‘equal dignity of all citizens’ and to the ‘equalization of rights and entitlements’ (Taylor,

1994, p. 37). Santos, Nunes and Meneses (2007), who are scholars from the global South warning of a naïve approach to universalism, stress that:

[T]he affirmation of equality based on universalistic presuppositions, such as those that prevail in Western individualistic conceptions of human rights, lead to the decharacterization and denial of differentiated identities, cultures and historical experiences, particularly through the refusal to recognise collective rights. (p. xivii)

Similarly, in the field of education, it has been noted that difference-blind practices that assume a homogeneous pupil population coupled with policies that suggest the equal treatment of all children result in reproducing differences and inequalities that further reinforce oppression and exclusion (Gillborn, 2004; Arshad et al., 2005). Consequently, despite the aim to challenge discrimination by according equal respect to all, recognition within the politics of universalism may result in often subtle and unconscious discrimination (Taylor, 1994).

Within the politics of difference, the focus turns away from universalism to distinctiveness. The emphasis is on the need for recognition of individuals' and groups' unique identities (Taylor, 1994). Drawing on the Hegelian idea that identity is constructed through interaction, through mutual recognition (Fraser, 2000), it is suggested that:

a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves. Nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being. (Taylor, 1994, p. 25)

Misrecognition, thus, does not only indicate lack of respect, but can have a harmful impact on the self-identification and self-esteem of members of devalued groups, if they internalise the negative image ascribed to them. Therefore, recognition aims at "repair[ing] internal self-dislocation by contesting the dominant culture's demeaning picture of the group" (Fraser, 2000, pp. 109-110). The politics of difference is based on the premise that within the context of European or White domination, other cultures have not been appreciated. Therefore, in order to accord equal respect to misrecognised cultures, it is necessary to "recognise and even

foster particularity” (ibid., p. 43). Contrary to the understanding of non-discrimination as equal treatment of all within the politics of universalism, the politics of difference often requires differential treatment on the basis of the differences among people, in order to avoid discrimination against misrecognised groups (Taylor, 1994).

The emphasis exclusively on difference has been widely criticized. On the one hand, it has been critiqued by proponents of the politics of equal dignity for “violating the principle of non-discrimination” (Taylor, 1994, p. 43). On the other hand, several critical theorists (e.g. Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997; Fraser, 2000; May & Sleeter, 2010; Banks, 2011; Grosfoguel, 2012) have criticised it for contributing to the perpetuation of structural inequalities and injustices as well as to separatism and fragmentation. Specifically, this approach to recognition may essentialise, simplify and reify group identities, discouraging and obscuring intragroup diversity and cultural critique and thus, may result in promoting conformism, intolerance, authoritarianism and patriarchy (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997; Fraser, 2000). Moreover, the concern with group-specific interests and separatism do not allow for dialogue and building alliances among subordinated and disadvantaged groups – at a regional, national and international level - to pursue social justice and an inclusive political, economic and cultural democracy (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997; Grosfoguel, 2012). As Jenkins (2008) stresses, “collective politics [which is central to social change] involves collective imaginings of similarity as well as of difference” (p. 24). Furthermore, the identity model of recognition contributes to what Fraser (2000) refers to as ‘the problem of displacement’, namely the focus on the recognition of group-specific identity displaces the redistribution of resources and power. Specifically, Fraser (2000) notes that proponents of the identity model either overlook the institutionalized and systemic character of cultural devaluation and, thus, its intertwinement with economic inequalities by restricting it to the level of discourse; or regard maldistribution as an effect of misrecognition, which will be remedied through recognition, without the need for a politics of redistribution. Thus, by downplaying the need for redistribution, this model of recognition may result in sustaining inequalities instead of challenging them.

In education, efforts for the recognition of group-specific identities often resulted in ‘contributions’ and ‘additive’ approaches that focus on the celebration of diversity, the limitations of which have already been discussed in earlier sections. Overall, such approaches have been widely criticised for overlooking structural constraints and power inequalities (e.g. Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997; May & Sleeter, 2010), perpetuating, thus, and even reinforcing as explained above, unequal power relations and social injustice. In this context, the decontextualized and depoliticised conception of cultural difference creates the illusion that through the recognition of group-specific identities and cultures, equality of opportunity will be achieved. However, as Kincheloe and Steinberg (1997) stress, this depoliticised version of multiculturalism “promises an emancipation that it can’t deliver, as it confuses psychological affirmation with political empowerment” (p. 16).

Fraser (2000) suggests an alternative approach to recognition: the ‘status model’. Specifically, she proposes the recognition of the status of misrecognized individuals as full members of society. Within this framework, misrecognition is viewed as social status subordination, which is effected through processes like cultural domination, non-recognition and disrespect (Fraser, 1997). Cultural domination refers to the imposition of one culture, one way of seeing the world; non-recognition refers to rendering a group’s culture invisible, by not recognizing their perspective; and disrespect - or othering - refers to routinely belittling, maligning, dehumanizing certain groups in public cultural representations and everyday interactions (ibid.). All three processes are encapsulated in Young’s (1990) definition of cultural imperialism, which shows how these processes are intertwined:

To experience cultural imperialism means to experience how the dominant meanings of a society render the particular perspective of one’s own group invisible at the same time as they stereotype one’s group and mark it out as the Other.

Cultural imperialism involves the universalization of a dominant group’s experience and culture, and its establishment as the norm.

The dominant group reinforces its position by bringing the other groups under the measure of its dominant norms. Consequently, the difference...becomes reconstructed largely as deviance and inferiority. (p. 59-60)

Being understood as institutionally embedded rather than restricted to the level of discourse, these processes of misrecognition result in 'constitut[ing] some categories of social actors as normative and others as deficient or inferior' and thus, in hindering parity of participation in social life (Fraser, 2000, p. 114). The aim of recognition in this model is 'replacing institutionalized value patterns that impede parity of participation with ones that enable or foster it' (ibid, p. 115).

The status model of recognition seems to move beyond the problems of universalism, essentialism, reification and displacement. It also moves beyond the individual and the cultural level and aims at confronting discrimination at the institutional level. It is clearly politically oriented towards social change for social justice, as it seeks the elimination of structural and material inequalities that affect people's lives and prevent certain groups from participating as peers in social life. However, it is not a rigid, universalistic approach that offers a one-size-fits-all solution, but it takes into account the specificities of the particular sociocultural, political and economic context and "allows for a range of possibilities, depending on what precisely the subordinated parties need in order to be able to participate as peers in social life" (Fraser, 2000, p. 115). Thus, by not establishing any closure as it does not predefine the approach to recognition to be taken, but, instead, like Derrida's (1984) deconstruction, being characterized by "an openness towards the [unforeseeable] other" (p. 124), this approach to recognition seems to do justice to the Other as Other.

As regards education, this approach to recognition means recognizing the status of misrecognized pupils as full members of the school community and by extension, of society. This requires identifying and removing barriers to their full participation and achievement in education and in school life, in general. In other words, it seems to require the deconstruction of oppressive structures and discourses and enabling border crossing, with a view to constructing 'equitable and socially just power relations' in schools and by extension, in society (Ladson

– Billings, 2004 [1998], p. 51). It is to these processes, namely deconstruction and border crossing, that the next two sections turn.

2.5 Deconstruction

Deconstruction is a concept that was formulated by the French philosopher Jacques Derrida and has its roots in Heidegger's concept of *Destruktion*. Although deconstruction has often been critiqued for nihilism and hyper-relativism and thus, associated with destruction (see Caputo, 1997; Biesta, 2009c), Derrida has rejected these critiques and asserted the affirmative and ethico-political character of deconstruction (e.g. see Derrida, 1984; Caputo, 1997). Specifically, Derrida (1984) has defined deconstruction as "a positive response to an alterity which necessarily calls, summons or motivates it. Attempting a more detailed explanation of what Derrida's deconstruction involves, Biesta (2009c) states that:

What is at stake in the occurrence of deconstruction is an attempt to bring into view the impossibility to totalize, the impossibility to articulate a self-sufficient, self-present center from which everything can be mastered and controlled. Deconstruction reveals that every inside has a constitutive outside that is not merely external but in a sense always already inhabits the inside, so that self-sufficiency or self-presence can be brought about only by an act of exclusion. What gives deconstruction its motive and drive is precisely its concern for - or, to be more precise, its wish to do justice to - what is excluded (p. 30).

Its concern for, and affirmation of the other – 'of what is made invisible by a particular presence', 'of what is excluded and forgotten', of what Derrida sometimes refers to as 'the impossible', that is 'what cannot be foreseen as a possibility' - is, according to Biesta, one of the reasons why Derrida (1992) has claimed that 'deconstruction is justice' (Biesta, 2009a, p. 394-395). As Derrida (2007[1987]) clarifies, deconstruction does not entail 'mak[ing] the other come, ...[but] let[ting] it come by preparing for its coming', by 'opening,...uncloseting, destabilizing foreclusionary structures so as to allow for the passage toward the other' (p. 45).

Deconstruction provides a way of reconceptualising education, with a view to affirming the Other's otherness, to restoring the dehumanised Other to their full humanity and thus, recognising the Other as a peer in social interaction. Several scholars (e.g. see Biesta & Egéa-Kuhne, 2001 for contributions by various scholars; Trifonas, 2003; Biesta, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c) have conceptualised deconstruction in education in different ways. Biesta (2009a) suggests 'witnessing metaphysics-in-deconstruction' (p. 391). The author states that 'the task is not to apply deconstruction to education. The task rather is to find out how and where deconstruction occurs or might occur in education' (Biesta, 2009b, p. 97). Biesta (2009a, 2009b) underlines the deconstructive nature of education, suggesting that teaching cannot actually represent the world as is, but involves the teacher's translation of meaning and the pupil's interpretation, which may not match the meaning transmitted by the teacher. These gaps in meaning constitute openings that can potentially become entrances for the coming of the Other. However, '[a]ny attempt to close...[these] gap[s], to deny the deconstructive nature of education...threatens this possibility and...[results in] socialization,...the insertion of the other, the newcomer, into the order or "economy" of the present and the same' (Biesta, 2009b, p.107), in other words, in the assimilation of the Other.

Biesta's (2009a; 2009b) suggestions about deconstruction in education echo various other scholars (e.g. Gundara, 2000; Giroux, 2005, 2016[2006]; Banks, 2006), who challenge the assumed objectivity and neutrality of education and suggest a multi-perspectival approach to education. However, unlike Biesta, other scholars' (e.g. Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997; Gundara, 2000; Giroux, 2005, 2016[2006]) suggestions imply a more active and conscious, political stance on the part of educators compared to the relatively passive stance implied by the witnessing of occurrences of deconstruction suggested by Biesta (2009a; 2009b). Even Derrida (2001) himself suggests a more active stance, when he refers to deconstruction as involving "analyz[ing] all the hidden assumptions which are implied in the philosophical, or the ethical, or the juridical, or the political" issues (p. 178). Derrida (2004[1990]) underlines the political character of deconstruction:

Deconstruction is ... the taking of a position, in the work itself, toward the politico-institutional structures that constitute and regulate our practice, our competences, and our performances. Precisely because deconstruction has never been concerned with the contents alone of meaning, it must not be separable from this politico-institutional problematic, and has to require a new questioning about responsibility..." (p. 102)

In the field of education, this concern with politico-institutional structures is reflected in the approaches to education suggested by theorists from various fields, such as Critical Race Theory (CRT), antiracism, critical multicultural education, intercultural education, feminism and radical education (e.g. Jackson, 1997; Kincheloe and Steinberg, 1997; Solorzano, 1998; Gundara, 2000; Gillborn, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2004[1998]; Giroux, 2005; 2016[2006]; May & Sleeter, 2010). One of the common features of all these approaches is an interest in the deconstruction of oppressive structures and discourses in education.

A deconstructive approach to the curriculum, which in most nation-states has focused on the children's socialisation into the national culture (Gundara, 2000; Banks, 2011), could expose whose perspectives have been included and whose excluded as well as hidden and taken-for-granted assumptions about otherness. Thus, it could challenge closures and distorted images of Others and replace them with openings for the Others' perspectives to be included. Santos, Nunes, & Meneses (2007) stress the need to replace the monoculture of Western knowledge by an 'ecology of knowledges', to challenge its exclusive validity and promote global cognitive justice, which is crucial for global social justice. Being inextricably linked with power, the geopolitics of knowledge and the ownership of knowledge, namely 'who produces knowledge, in what context, and for whom' matter (Santos, Nunes, & Meneses, 2007, p. xxxiv), as underlined by postmodern and critical theorists from various fields, such as multicultural education (Banks, 2006 [1993]), intercultural education (e.g. Gundara, 2000), radical education (e.g. Giroux, 2005, 2016[2006]), critical multiculturalism (e.g. Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997), post-colonialism (e.g. Said, 1978; Santos, Nunes, & Meneses, 2007), feminism (e.g. see Jackson, 1997) and decolonialism (e.g. Grosfoguel, 2013). Hence, if intercultural education is to promote social justice and equity and the recognition of all children's status as full members of the society, it seems

necessary to move beyond thinking 'on' or 'about' culturally diverse groups as 'objects of study' to thinking 'from', 'with' and 'alongside' these groups viewed as subjects (Grosfoguel, 2012).

Furthermore, Kincheloe and Steinberg (1997) suggest that pupils need to learn how to deconstruct codes, texts, symbols and institutional structures of education to reveal and challenge the hidden cultural assumptions underpinning the knowledge construction and all aspects of schooling. In this way, the pupils could learn 'to deconstruct the ideological forces that shape their lives' and thus, develop political literacy and critical consciousness that will enable them to use their agency to resist oppression and challenge social injustice (ibid, p. 52; Ladson-Billings, 1995). However, even if teachers attempt to include multiple perspectives in their lessons and assist their pupils in deconstructing dominant discourses and structures, their efforts may have limited impact if, for example, the pupils' learning is assessed by means of standardised tests which accept certain responses as correct and reject others as wrong. This 'normative closure' (Biesta, 2009b) contributes to the understanding of one perspective as the correct one, the superior one, while all the other perspectives are instantly inferiorised. As Kincheloe and Steinberg (1997) observe, dominant curricula with a standardised definition of knowledge and / or standardised assessment leave little or no space for the inclusion of marginalised knowledges.

Hence, if the goal of intercultural education is social justice and equity, the continuous deconstruction of whole education systems seems essential, so that patterns of cultural value that inferiorise and subordinate the Other can be revealed and replaced by an openness towards the unforeseeable Other. This openness needs to permeate educational policies as well as the whole school environment, which, as Banks (2006) suggests, encompasses the school policy and politics; the school ethos; the official and the hidden curriculum; the staff's attitudes, beliefs, perceptions and actions; the instructional materials; assessment; the languages and dialects of the school; and community participation. This, of course, reflects an oppositional and critical stance to the status quo and therefore, may not be espoused at a national level, as political and economic interests are involved.

Hence, deconstruction is less likely to constitute a top-down approach to transformation of oppressive educational systems than a bottom-up approach.

Deconstruction allows moving from questions, like ‘Can the Subaltern speak?’ (Spivak, 1988) that take the subalternity of the Other for granted, to questions, like ‘What kinds of discursive positionalities of receptivity enable us to listen to Others?’ (Biesta & Egéa-Kuhne, 2001, p. 7). Although deconstruction does not provide answers, as this would be a closure, it invites educators to avoid being what Derrida describes as ‘[l]iterary people [littéraires]’:

[S]omeone who never fails to believe, want, claim himself or herself to be external, beside (in fact above) the scholarly or academic apparatus and does not see to what degree this phantasm itself is a direct product constantly reproduced in him or her by the academy. (Derrida 1995b: 63 as cited in Biesta & Egéa-Kuhne, 2001, p. 3)

The extent to which teachers will embrace deconstruction and adopt this questioning and critically reflective stance seems to largely depend, as Biesta (2009a, 2009b) notes, on what they understand to be the purpose of education as well as on their ability – and their willingness, readiness, conscious choice and commitment and some flexibility allowed by the education system and the school, I would add – ‘to live with the risk involved’ in allowing for ‘the in-coming of the other’ (Biesta, 2009b, p. 111). Deconstruction provides a way for a justice-oriented reconceptualization of education and its purpose. It allows moving beyond market-oriented definitions of education and a ‘banking concept’ of education (Freire, 1972), where the teacher is viewed as the transmitter of a specific body of knowledge, skills and culture and pupils as empty vessels that need to be filled. Deconstruction challenges the understanding of the teacher as the sole authority in class and invites teachers to share authority and co-construct knowledge with their pupils and their parents, recognising and respecting their cultural and linguistic capital (see Edgoose, 2001; Standish, 2001; Biesta, 2009a, 2009b). As Gundara (2000) stresses, teachers need to “be aware of the varying cultural endowments their students bring to the classroom, be willing to welcome unfamiliar interpretations, and be ready to question their own” (p. 124-125). This willingness, readiness and commitment is more likely to be expressed by educators

who understand education not as ‘a big reproduction machine’ (Biesta, 2009a) but as a means that can contribute, to the liberation of people from oppression, as suggested by Freire, or to social transformation for justice, as suggested by Giroux and Gorski.

As explained in this section, deconstruction prepares the ground for the Other to come by ‘opening...uncloseting, destabilizing foreclosure structures so as to allow for the passage toward the other’ (Derrida, 2007[1987], p. 45). The next section turns to border crossing - the ‘passage toward the other’.

2.6 Border Crossing

Border crossing is a term introduced by Giroux (2005) in his seminal book on radical education entitled *Border Crossings: Cultural Workers and the Politics of Education*. Some scholars have used the term ‘border’ in a depoliticised way. For example, Aikenhead (1996) uses ‘border crossing’ to refer to moving from one culture to another, which sometimes might be unproblematic, as in the case of going from a research conference to a family reunion, while in other cases it might be problematic, as in the case of non-Western pupils who travel from their home culture to the subculture of subjects grounded in the Western culture, such as science. Other scholars have used it in a politicised way (e.g. Erickson, 2004; Giroux, 2016 [2006]). For instance, Erickson (2004) draws a distinction between the terms ‘boundary’ and ‘border’. Erickson uses the former as a neutral term to refer to the presence of cultural difference and the latter to refer to a cultural difference that is politicised, namely it is used as the rationale for different rights – for privilege or disadvantage. Whether a cultural difference is socially constructed as a boundary or a border may vary over time and across space. When it is framed as a border, then, as Erickson (2004) explains, the differences in privilege are associated with the presence or lack of certain cultural knowledge.

In the context of the classroom, Erickson (2004) recommends ‘reframing borders as boundaries’ by means of a ‘third space’ pedagogy, whereby difference is used

by the teacher as a resource to bridge the official school knowledge and culture and the minority pupils' community knowledges and cultures. In this way, a 'third space' is created – 'a hybrid discourse that allows students to use the voices they bring to the classroom as they begin to affiliate with school voices and discourses and to appropriate them as their own' (ibid., p. 48). This can prevent 'cultural border wars', which, as he suggests, may result from focusing solely on the dominant culture in the curriculum, ignoring cultural diversity, and can turn the classroom into an unsafe and alienating space for minority children.

Like Erickson, Giroux (2016 [2006]) provides a politicised definition of 'borders' as:

[C]ultural borders historically constructed [around axes of difference and power] and socially organized within maps of rules and regulations that limit and enable particular identities, individual capacities, and social forms. (p. 51)

Giroux (2016 [2006]) explains that border crossing involves pupils "cross[ing] borders of meaning, maps of knowledge, social relations, and values that are increasingly being negotiated and rewritten as the codes and regulations which organize them become destabilized and reshaped" (p. 51). For this purpose, he recommends a 'border pedagogy', which, unlike Erickson's 'third space' pedagogy, has a clear political orientation. Within the framework of border pedagogy, "difference becomes a basis for solidarity and unity rather than for hierarchy, denigration, competition, and discrimination", aiming at the transformation of both oppressive power relations and of public consciousness (Giroux, 2016 [2006], p. 59). Specifically, border pedagogy involves including pupils' voices and cultural capitals as a basis for deconstructing the hegemonic discourses and master narratives that comprise the official curriculum, by critically questioning the omissions and tensions between them and the self-representations of minority groups, as they may appear in 'forgotten' or repressed memories, histories, experiences, texts and community narratives. By critically engaging with their experiences and stories, pupils can gain an understanding of how these and their identities have been socially and historically constructed. A border pedagogy can, thus, enable pupils not only to cross and challenge borders but also to create

‘borderlands’, where they use the knowledge they construct to collectively “reclaim and remake their histories, voices, and visions as part of a wider struggle to change those material and social relations that deny radical pluralism as the basis of democratic political community” (Giroux, 2016 [2006], p. 59). By assisting children to develop a critical stance towards hegemonic discourses, to reconstruct hitherto stigmatised identities, marginalised histories, silenced voices and denied learning possibilities and develop an oppositional and transformative consciousness, border pedagogy can enable the children’s agency to resist oppression in society and in schools and develop an understanding of how they can challenge and collectively transform oppressive power relations.

The feasibility of Giroux’s border crossing has been questioned by the feminist theorist, Jackson (1997), who suggests that it constitutes an abstract pedagogy that does not address the various barriers to border crossings. Referring to higher education, Jackson (1997) raises the following questions:

How can enabling pedagogic conditions be created within the patriarchal framework of higher educational institutions? To what extent are lecturers concerned with enabling students to challenge dominant power relations? Is the central focus of universities to challenge, or to uphold, the status quo? (p. 460)

These questions can be easily applied to schools and teachers, considering the wider socio-political context in which they operate in the Western world, which is characterised not only by patriarchy, but also by Eurocentrism and capitalism. Giroux (2016 [2006]) himself admits that ‘[t]he theoretical sweep may be broad, the sentiment utopian, but it is better than wallowing in guilt or refusing to fight for the possibility of a better world’ (p. 63-64).

A border pedagogy seems to be key to education grounded in social justice and equity but particularly challenging in conflict-ridden contexts, like Cyprus, where the borders between ‘us’ – the good ones- and ‘them’ – the enemies, the bad ones- are not only geopolitical but are also constantly reproduced and reinforced through the hegemonic narrative of unilateral victimhood and the collective memories of

past trauma (see 1.3.1). In such a context, the following recommendation by Giroux (1997) seems relevant:

Transformative intellectuals then need to begin with a recognition of those manifestations of suffering that constitute historical memory as well as the immediate conditions of oppression. The pedagogical rationality at work here is one that defines radical educators as bearers of "dangerous memory"... (Giroux, 1997, p. 105)

‘As [and if] bearers of dangerous memories’, namely memories of the past that disrupt the dominant historical narratives and the essentialist understandings of group identities that these narratives perpetuate, teachers could contribute to helping their pupils deconstruct taken-for-granted collective memories that portray ‘us’ as the only victims and ‘them’ as the perpetrators of injustice and thus, sustain the socially constructed borders between ‘us’ and ‘them’, and reconstruct the relation between the Self and the Other not in opposition to the Other but, as suggested by Derrida (1984) and Jenkins (2008), as interconnected or, as suggested by Zembylas & Bekerman (2008), in solidarity with the Other. Referring to the context of post-conflict Rwanda, Hodgkin (2006) suggests that reconciliation and peace can be promoted by engaging pupils in the critical discussion of multiple historical narratives and the exploration of multiple identities rather than through the imposition of a single, supposedly objective truth about the historical past, and the focus on a unidimensional national identity. In this way, the children can develop a critical consciousness and ‘values and capacities that make intolerance of extremism and racism a freely chosen path’ (ibid, p. 208). However, as mentioned earlier, this presupposes that the teachers have developed ‘dangerous memories’, political literacy and a critical consciousness, in other words to have gone through the process that Freire (1973 [1969]) refers to as ‘conscientização’.

Critical consciousness, which can develop, according to Freire (1973 [1969]), through a ‘critical educational effort’ (p. 19) - through engaging in critical dialogue with the world and with others - involves a critical awareness of the ways in which power operates. As Giroux (2016 [2006]) states:

If the concept of border pedagogy is to be linked to the imperatives of a critical democracy, as it must, it is important that educators possess a theoretical grasp of the ways in which difference is constructed through various representations and practices that name, legitimate, marginalize, and exclude the cultural capital and voices of subordinate groups in ... society. (p. 59)

Most teachers are often members of the dominant group and may not have developed this critical awareness, unless they have had life or professional experiences that have helped them develop it. Therefore, Erickson's (2004) 'third space' pedagogy may be more easily adopted by teachers than Giroux's (2005, 2016 [2006]) politicised 'border pedagogy'. It could be argued, however, that any depoliticised approach that is not underpinned by a critical analysis of the ways in which power and privilege operate and a commitment to combatting discrimination and inequalities would probably result in reducing intercultural education to approaches that leave institutional discrimination unchallenged. This may be true to some extent, as such efforts may not be systematic. However, it could be argued that a multi-perspectival approach to education – even if initially relatively uncritically adopted - could contribute to both teachers' and pupils' conscientization, if followed by self-reflexivity. As Giroux (2016 [2006]) notes, border crossing "provides opportunities for teachers to deepen their own understanding of the discourse of various others in order to effect a more dialectical understanding of their own politics, values, and pedagogy" (p. 61). Similarly, Holliday (2011) suggests that turning the gaze to "the diverse complexities of modern everyday life ... might break the essentialist illusion of Other" (p. 85). Drawing on studies of anti-racist school practices, Gillborn (2004) notes that the involvement of local communities and the democratic participation of all pupils in the school allows majority members of staff and pupils to realise the complexity and diversity of racialized identities, and thus, problematize deeply ingrained stereotypes and binary divisions, and to "engage with the cross-cutting realities of [racialized], gendered, sexualised and class-based inequalities that ...act on and through the lives of young people" (p. 43). Hence, systematic border crossing could facilitate challenging the socially and historically constructed borders and building a class or school community that not simply celebrates but

actually embraces difference no longer viewed as the exotic and inferior Other but as the norm.

A number of factors can facilitate or constrain crossing, challenging and transforming borders in the classroom and at the school level. The teacher seems to play a key role. Besides including multiple languages, cultures, histories and religions in the curriculum, the significance of the teacher's high expectations of all their pupils and of assisting them all to achieve academically has been emphasised in the literature (e.g. Delpit, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Russo, 2006; Rouse, 2008). Helping minority pupils learn the culture of power, its codes and about the power relationships they represent is necessary for minority pupils to actively participate in society (Delpit, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1995). On the contrary, teachers' low expectations and devaluing behaviour may have a detrimental effect on pupils' effort and engagement in learning (Rosenholtz & Simpson, 1984; Steele, 1992; Cummins, 2009a) and thus, on pupils' academic achievement (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968; Steele, 1992; Heckmann, 2008; Kyles & Olafson, 2008) and on their self-esteem and social inclusion within and beyond the school community (Delpit, 1995). In general, the teacher's interactions with pupils seem to play a very significant role. Cummins (2001 as cited in Conteh, 2007) underlines the significance of the teacher's disposition towards culturally diverse pupils, suggesting that when the teacher-pupil relationship aims at empowerment rather than reproduces the oppressive power relations prevailing in society, the classroom culture can be transformed and the provision of equitable educational opportunities is possible. Similarly, Kleinfeld's (1975) research on the characteristics of effective teachers of indigenous pupils revealed that the most effective teachers in terms of pupils' academic performance were the 'warm demanders', namely the ones who built a warm relationship with their pupils and were at the same time demanding as regards their learning. Hence, the teacher seems to play a very significant role in enabling or constraining minority pupils' border crossings.

The school culture can also play an important role in enabling or constraining border crossings through its policies, institutionalized processes and practices.

Ensuring all pupils' participation in the school community, recognizing and respecting their diversity is a way to enable border crossings at the school level. Another way is involving minority pupils' parents in school life and in their children's education (e.g. Delpit, 1995; Heckman, 2008; Shibuya, 2011). For example, describing an exemplary elementary school in Japan, Shibuya (2011) explains how the provision of Japanese classes which 'foreign' parents can attend with their children has enabled 'foreign' parents not only to familiarize themselves with the school culture and the Japanese language, but also to take part in the parent-teacher association. Moreover, Delpit (1995) underlines the need for teachers to consult culturally diverse pupils' parents so that the teachers cross the borders into their pupils' home cultures and understand better who their pupils are, to accommodate their teaching to their pupils' needs and interests. It could also be suggested that inviting pupils' parents into class to share their knowledges and experiences with the pupils can also facilitate the teacher's and the children's border crossing and engaging with diverse worldviews. Furthermore, the establishment of links between the school and the community can also facilitate border crossing, by contributing to children's inclusion in the community in which they live. In addition, by creating links with marginalised communities, the school could enable the pupils' and the staff's exploration of other possibilities of seeing and being in and with the social world through their familiarisation with the perspectives, cultures and histories of these communities (Kincheloe and Steinberg, 1997). Finally, the presence of culturally diverse school staff can also facilitate border crossings as they may present both pupils and their colleagues with diverse worldviews (see Johnson, 2002). However, as Hikido and Murray (2016) warn, if members of historically subjugated groups are merely 'added on' to the existing staff, while the power remains concentrated among dominant group members, hierarchies and hegemonic norms will be reproduced and difference will remain in the periphery. In general, all the initiatives at the school and classroom level will only allow border crossings if they are not tokenistic but are underpinned by a genuine openness towards Others and a respect and recognition of Others as fully human, according them equal status.

As explained above, although Giroux's radical vision of border crossing may not be easy to realise, it is possible to create openings for border crossings at the classroom and at the school level, even if there might be no or limited institutional support at the national level, as suggested by the aforementioned examples provided by Gillborn (2004) and Shibuya (2011). Giroux seems to mainly focus on the border crossings of members of marginalised groups. However, I would argue that border crossing is particularly - if not to say more - important for the members of the dominant group, as they are the ones who have the power to determine the extent to which the borders between 'us' and 'them' will remain rigid or become porous and permeable. Border crossings are performed by most minority pupils to a greater or lesser extent in their everyday life, as they move from home and their communities to school and the society. Members of the dominant group can choose whether to cross borders and encounter and genuinely listen to the Other as fully human. Through border crossing, they can gain an insight into the ways in which power operates to sustain their privilege and the disadvantage of the Other. This can enable them to deconstruct misconceptions and institutionalised value patterns that sustain hierarchies and, thus, the disadvantage of the Other. This process of conscientisation may enable them to achieve agency in breaking the cycles of oppression, constructing equitable and socially just relations and engaging into genuine rather than tokenistic intercultural dialogue with the common goal of building a more just democratic world. However, it must be acknowledged that the political, historical, sociocultural and institutional context in which teachers operate may affect the degree of risk involved in crossing, challenging and transforming borders and thus, the extent to which teachers are enabled, encouraged and / or ready to do so. Writing about conflict-affected contexts, Zembylas and Bekerman (2008) and Hodgkin (2006) suggest that such ventures cannot be undertaken solely by individual teachers but need the support of several social and political sites. The next chapter explores and discusses in more detail the various factors shaping teacher agency and intercultural education policy enactments in Cyprus.

2.7 Conclusion

The above discussion of key theoretical ideas associated with intercultural education suggests that a universal definition of intercultural education is highly likely to result in perpetuating injustice and inequities as it would fail to take into account the historical, sociocultural, political and economic context and how it has shaped social relations in the specific context. Hence, it would risk failing to address context-specific injustices and inequalities. Nevertheless, if intercultural education is not underpinned by a specific and clear theoretical framework, it will probably continue being implemented in predominantly conservatized and depoliticized ways that do not achieve the goals expressed by the European Union Education Ministers in their 2015 Declaration on Promoting Citizenship and the Common Values of Freedom, Tolerance and Non-Discrimination through Education (see 2.2). The discussion of the concepts of essentialism, recognition, deconstruction and border crossing and of constructions of the Self and the Other has provided an overview of key theoretical issues pertaining to intercultural education.

If intercultural education is to promote justice, inclusion, equity, democracy, critical thinking, intercultural dialogue and active citizenship, as suggested in the aforementioned declaration, then it seems essential that it constitutes a political, transformative approach, which permeates the whole education system and recognizes the Others and their knowledges, according them equal status to the Self and to Western knowledge. For children to develop democratic values and learn how to practise democracy, social justice and active citizenship, it seems essential that schools and classrooms become sites where they experience a democracy that respects pluralism; social justice; and active and justice-oriented citizenship (Clark, 2006; Banks, 2011). Therefore, it seems necessary that intercultural education enables the deconstruction of discourses, beliefs, attitudes, behaviours and structures, uncovering, challenging and transforming institutionalized cultural value patterns and structures that sustain the Others' disadvantage in education and in society. Systematically and consistently identifying closures throughout the system and in everyday school life and

replacing them with openings that will facilitate border crossings seems to be an essential feature of an intercultural education that aspires to promote a genuine intercultural dialogue among peers rather than a tokenistic dialogue that reproduces oppression. Such an intercultural education which will contribute to the ‘conscientization’ and empowerment of all members of the school community seems to have the potential to provide equitable opportunities to all pupils to participate and achieve in education and to help pupils develop into justice-oriented, active, local, national and global citizens.

Having discussed the theoretical issues pertaining to intercultural education, the next chapter explores the factors that may affect constructions of intercultural education in schools and reviews research on cultural diversity and intercultural education in Cyprus.

Chapter 3 Literature Review

Having presented the historical, political, sociocultural and national education context and the conceptual and theoretical debates in which this thesis is located, this chapter turns to the micro-level, namely the school level. The chapter is divided into two parts. The first part draws on literature on policy enactment and teacher agency and discusses key factors which may affect teachers' responses to the recent curriculum reform and the shifts in the intercultural education policy discourse in Cyprus. The second part reviews empirical studies on intercultural education and cultural diversity in Cyprus, identifies the research gaps and outlines the contribution of the present study in the field of intercultural education in the Cypriot context.

PART A Policy Enactment and Teacher Agency

3.1 Curriculum Policy Reforms and Teacher Agency

There is a tendency for modern curricula in several countries in Europe, including Cyprus, to shift away from rigidity and high prescription towards more curriculum freedom, thereby, expanding possibilities for teachers' local professional decision making for the provision of quality education (see Kuiper & Berkvens, 2013; Biesta, Priestley & Robinson, 2015).

However, research into teachers' responses to these reforms in various countries suggests that this change in the policy discourse does not necessarily entail changes in practice (e.g. see Kärner, Jürimäe, Jaani & Kõiv, 2013 for Estonia; Philippou, Kontovourki & Theodorou, 2014 for Cyprus; Priestley, Biesta & Robinson, 2015 for Scotland). Philippou, Kontovourki and Theodorou's (2014) qualitative study into 66 primary school teachers' sense of professionalism in the process of curriculum reform in Cyprus shows that teachers mainly oscillated between the positions of 'receiver' (42%) and 'implementer' (32%) of the

curriculum. The former ‘yearned for prescriptive teaching guidance to counter feelings of anxiety and helplessness’ and appeared puzzled regarding the expectations of their redefined role (ibid., p. 620). The latter reflected an understanding of their role as agents of change in their classrooms but also underlined the need for expert guidance and support. Few utterances (14.5%) were assigned to the ‘reformer’ position, which reflected confidence in their expertise to develop curricula in collaboration with other agents and saw the reform as institutionalising what they had already been doing. These replies may have been affected by the fact that these data were collected right after the end of professional development seminars about the new curriculum, where the teachers were presented with their redefined role for the first time. However, teachers’ negotiation of, and even resistance to, their redefined role in curriculum policy reforms has also been recorded in other countries, such as Scotland (e.g. McAra, Broadley & McLauchlan, 2013; Priestley et al., 2015).

The policy process is not linear and top-down, but dynamic, complex and context-contingent (Scott, 2000; Ball, Maguire & Braun, 2012). Policies, even when centrally mandated, are interpreted and translated into practice in different and variable ways at the school level (Osborn et al., 2000; Maguire, Ball & Braun, 2010; Robinson, 2012). As Priestley, Biesta and Robinson (2015) observe, ‘it is one thing to expect teachers to be agentic in developing the curriculum, but it is quite another thing for it to happen in practice’ (p. 152).

Drawing on Priestley, Biesta and Robinson’s (2015) ecological approach to teacher agency and Pantić’s (2015) model of teacher agency for social justice, teacher agency is understood as highly relational and context-contingent in this study. It is not something that teachers have, but something they can achieve depending on the unique ‘interplay of individuals’ capacities and environment conditions’, namely ‘the cultures, structures and relationships that shape the particular “ecologies” within which teachers work’ (Priestley et al., 2015, p. 3).

The key factors that shape teacher agency and, thus, policy enactment are discussed in detail below.

3.2 Factors Shaping Teacher Agency and Policy Enactment

3.2.1 Teachers' Beliefs

Teachers' beliefs have been described as filters through which teachers interpret and enact policies (Osborn et al., 2000; Maguire et al., 2010). Teacher's beliefs are context-specific (Pajares, 1992) and encompass beliefs about the self, about others (pupils, parents, colleagues) and about practices (content and pedagogy) (Priestley et al., 2015). Teachers' professional beliefs are understood as being part of a broader belief system (Pajares, 1992) and linked to their personal beliefs (Pohan, 1996; Turner, Christensen & Meyer, 2009). While some researchers suggest that teachers' personal and professional beliefs are distinct but at the same time related and friction between the two should be prevented (Korthagen, 2004), others suggest that they are interrelated, interacting aspects of the self and form individual "webs of interlocation", to which changes may be made without, however, breaking the dependence on the web (Taylor, 1992; Hamilton, 2013). This raises questions as to whether, through teacher training and external pressures, such as new policies, school leaders, school inspectors and peer influence / interactions, it is possible for teachers to develop professional beliefs and practices that are separate from and may contradict their personal beliefs. Or, according to the 'web of interlocation', changes to their professional beliefs and practices may be effected if potential dissonance between existing personal and professional beliefs is acknowledged and an informed decision is taken about a way forward that either minimizes the conflict or creates new narratives in the web.

Teachers' beliefs are influenced by their life and professional histories and contribute to shaping their professional habitus (Osborn et al., 2000; Biesta et al., 2015). For example, teachers' life experiences influence their beliefs about, and attitudes towards, cultural diversity (Aaronsohn, Carter & Howell, 1995; Johnson, 2002; Garmon, 2004; Mahon, 2006; Kyles & Olafson, 2008; Arshad, 2012a). Cross-cultural experiences, such as travelling or studying abroad, exposure to and

interaction with different cultures through one's education or family context dispose teachers towards more positive views of cultural diversity (Garmon, 2004; Mahon, 2006; Kyles & Olafson, 2008). On the other hand, research suggests that teachers who grew up and were educated in a monocultural context without any exposure to cultural diversity tend to adopt deficit views of difference (Aaronsohn, Carter & Howell, 1995). Such deficit views, which are commonly recorded among teachers in various parts of the world, including Cyprus (e.g. Aguado, Ballesteros & Malik, 2003; Papamichael, 2009, 2011; Hajisoteriou & Angelides, 2016a), imply that difference is problematic and needs to be fixed through the assimilation of culturally diverse pupils into the dominant culture, so that they fit in (Angelides, Stylianou & Leigh, 2004; Darmody, 2011). Low achievement or lack of engagement tend to be attributed to pupils' personal or cultural attributes and their failure to assimilate (Mitchell, 2012). Hence, the Other's culture is treated as inferior, as a problem. Teachers who value diversity and believe in all pupils' ability to achieve have been found to have high expectations from all their pupils, invest time in building relationships with their pupils and develop culturally relevant practices that draw on pupils' cultural and linguistic capital (e.g. Ladson-Billings, 1994). A deficit approach to difference seems to constrain teacher agency, as it does not enable teachers to recognise the Other as equal and to adopt a social model approach to difference. A social model approach, which has its origins in the field of disability, involves identifying and removing barriers to access, participation and success rather than attributing the problem to the cultural deficit of the individual and their family (for the social model of disability see Booth & Ainscow, 2002; Carson, 2009). Barriers can exist in the setting or emerge through the interaction of pupils and their contexts, namely the people, institutions, policies, cultures and social and economic circumstances that impact upon their lives (Booth & Ainscow, 2002). Hence, teachers' life experiences can affect teachers' beliefs about cultural diversity and in turn, impact upon their practice, constraining or enhancing their agency in promoting intercultural education.

Besides teachers' life experiences, teachers' professional histories seem to also affect their professional beliefs. For example, many teachers' long professional experience in centralised educational systems with prescriptive curricula in

Cyprus (Philippou et al., 2014) and in other parts of the world (e.g. see Kärner, Jürimäe, Jaani & Kõiv, 2013 for Estonia; Priestley, Biesta & Robinson, 2015 for Scotland) has been described as one of the potential reasons for teachers' discomfort with increasing curricular freedom and calls for them to act as agents of change. It is suggested that their professional experience has shaped their professional habitus, including their beliefs about their role and their practices, in such a way, that the shift of their role – their 're-professionalization' – in the policy discourse, often without adequate preparation, may have inflicted on them what Philippou, Kontovourki and Theodorou (2014) refer to as a 'cultural or professional shock' (p. 620). In contrast, in countries, like Finland, where this transition from tight regulation to increased autonomy was smooth and gave teachers the time to prepare for it and where teachers have been operating for several years now in a system that allows them high degrees of autonomy, teachers' beliefs about their role have been shaped accordingly (see Erss, Kalmus and Autio, 2016). Thus, it could be argued that teachers in Cyprus who have been working in a monocultural and nationalistic, centralised education system, in which Hellenocentrism has been the norm and which reproduces negative stereotypes of the primary 'Other' (Spyrou, 2002, 2006; Zembylas, 2010d; Charalambous, Charalambous & Zembylas, 2013), have had limited space to develop their agency in relation to intercultural education.

Teachers' beliefs not only shape their expectations about their role, their pupils and their practices but can also be oriented towards the future, reflecting their purposes (Pantić, 2015) or, as mentioned by Priestley, Biesta and Robinson (2015), their aspirations. These aspirations can be limited or broad in scope and can be short-, mid- or long-term. The extent to which teachers set goals and can imagine alternative possibilities and futures in their practice will affect teacher agency and thus, their responses to policy reforms. Specifically, a narrow vision of education restricted to its instrumental purposes constricts teacher agency as opposed to a moral vision of education. Based on ethnographic case studies in three Scottish schools examining teacher agency against the backdrop of the curriculum reform in Scotland, Biesta, Priestley and Robinson (2015) found that teachers' deficit views of their learners and their narrow understanding of their

role and of the purpose of education, which was often defined in short-term, instrumental terms, restricted what could be understood as feasible under the new curriculum. In contrast, a moral vision of education grounded in the values of equity and social justice has been repeatedly cited in the literature as having the potential to mobilise teachers to take transformative action (Sachs, 2003; Gorski, 2006, 2008; Pantić, 2015). Such a vision can provide teachers with a sense of purpose and motivate them to exercise their agency, driven by the aspiration to provide a more socially just and equitable education and by extension, to contribute to the liberation of people from oppression, as suggested by Freire, or to social transformation for justice, as suggested by Giroux and Gorski. It can, thus, enable them to move beyond a superficial and fragmented treatment of diversity and guide their systematic efforts to make issues of diversity central rather than peripheral in the school agenda and in their teaching content and practices. Hence, it could be argued that if intercultural education is not framed as part of a wider transformative vision and the focus remains on the narrow, instrumental purposes of education, teacher agency will be constrained, as teachers' thinking and actions will be restricted by the performative, market-driven agenda, which is more likely to result in practices that widen rather than close the attainment gap.

Teachers' beliefs influence their perceptions of reality and their processing of new information (Pajares, 1992; Causey, Thomas & Armento, 2000), their attitudes (Pohan, 1996; Hamilton, 2013) and eventually, their behaviour and teaching practices (Pajares, 1992; Sercu, García & Prieto, 2005; Turner et al., 2009; Llurda & Lasagabaster, 2010). Hence, changes in teachers' practices towards more inclusive and intercultural approaches seem to be highly contingent on teachers' beliefs (Pohan, 1996; Sercu, García & Prieto, 2005; Llurda & Lasagabaster, 2010). Based on their literature review, Causey, Thomas and Armento (2000) identify three common beliefs that often act as constraints to cultural majority teachers' understanding of power relations and of their privilege and, thus, to their agency for social justice. These include their beliefs in an 'optimistic individualism', in 'absolute democracy' and in 'naïve egalitarianism' (ibid., p.33-34). In other words, beliefs that individual efforts and hard work will definitely lead to success;

beliefs that 'kids are kids' irrespective of their cultural background or that the same 'good' pedagogy is effective for all pupils; and that 'each person is created equal, should have access to equal resources, and should be treated equally' (ibid., p. 34). By ignoring pupils' different backgrounds, interests, needs and experiences, and assuming that they are all the same, teachers fail to acknowledge and challenge the systemic, institutional and pedagogical barriers to some of their learners' participation in the learning process and achievement. Hence, equal treatment does not necessarily entail fair treatment, as explained in chapter 2. On the contrary, "[i]nvisibility of difference is a feature of exclusion" (Arshad et al., 2005, p. 168), which serves to legitimize inequality and discrimination in education and in society (James, 2011). Drawing on Vosniadou and Brewer's (1987) framework for conceptualising cognitive change, Causey et al. (2000) suggest that significant changes to one's belief structure can be understood as 'radical restructuring of one's world view', which 'often occur[s] following reflection over life crises, serious cognitive dissonance, and the perceived need to accommodate new ideas and information' (p. 34).

Research into teachers' beliefs can illuminate 'the individual and collective discourses that inform teachers' perceptions, judgments and decision-making and that motivate and drive teachers' action' (Biesta et al., 2015). Although there is plenty of research in Cyprus and other parts of the world into preservice and in-service teachers' beliefs about cultural diversity (e.g. Causey et al., 2000; Zembylas, 2010g; Papamichael, 2011; Hajisoteriou & Angelides, 2016a) and on teachers' understandings of intercultural education (e.g. Eteokleous & Christodoulou, 2010; Valdiviezo, 2010; Gropas & Triandafyllidou, 2011; Hajisoteriou & Angelides, 2016a), research into their beliefs about intercultural education is more limited and is mainly based on data collected by means of questionnaires (e.g. Leeman & Ledoux, 2005; Llurda & Lasagabaster, 2010).

Llurda and Lasagabaster's (2010) survey of 253 pre-service and in-service teachers' beliefs about interculturalism suggests that, despite acknowledging the lack of means to foster intercultural education in schools, most teachers – no exact percentage is given – hold favourable beliefs about intercultural education and are

open to implementing it. However, how these teachers' positive stance is translated into practice was not explored. Leeman and Ledoux's (2005) survey on 74 Dutch teachers' opinions on intercultural education led them to the conclusion that "[i]ntercultural education is a container concept" and that there are no "[s]pecific knowledge-oriented, attitudes-oriented or skills-oriented approaches to intercultural education" (p. 586). A limitation of the aforementioned studies into teachers' beliefs about intercultural education is that they are based on data collected by means of questionnaires. In order to delve into teachers' beliefs, it is necessary to examine not only teachers' belief statements but also their intentions and actual practices (Rokeach, 1968; Pajares, 1992). Moreover, questionnaires cannot capture the immediate classroom context and the institutional, political, sociocultural and historical context in which the teachers have been educated, live and work, which affect teachers' beliefs and practices (Kyles & Olafson, 2008; Turner, et al., 2009; Bleszynska, 2011). Biesta, Priestley and Robinson's (2015) study into the role of beliefs for teacher agency suggests that the achievement of agency does not depend solely on individual teachers' beliefs but also on the wider context and the opportunities it provides them to engage with their beliefs and to collectively develop teacher agency. Consequently, to gain an insight into teachers' intercultural education policy enactment, it seems important to explore their beliefs and practices using a qualitative approach, such as ethnography. Ethnography allows the researcher to immerse themselves into the institutional context in which policy is enacted, experience the participants' everyday life experiences (Creswell, 2007) and develop an understanding of the policy process from within through fieldwork with people rather than research on people (Thomas, 2013).

Before the discussion turns to the impact of the context on policy enactment, the next section focuses on another element that seems to be a key aspect of teachers' capacity to achieve agency: teachers' knowledge.

3.2.2 Teachers' Knowledge

Teachers' knowledge is another factor that mediates policy enactment (Humes, 2003; Maguire et al., 2010). As Humes (2003) underlines, policy enactment 'depends on the expertise and commitment of individual teachers' (p. 84). Enabling teachers to make informed and conscious choices regarding their practice, knowledge can help teachers have confidence in their capacity to exercise their agency in a transformative way (e.g. Long, 2004; Theoharis & O'Toole, 2011). This confidence provides them with a sense of control rather than a sense of confusion and powerlessness often caused by changes in policies (Helsby, 1999; Osborn et al., 2000). As the teachers in Long's (2004) study suggested, 'their sense of confidence in being able to effect change was directly related to their ability to express understandings of theory and practice' (p. 149).

In the field of intercultural education, lack of professional experience and preparation for intercultural education are commonly cited as reasons for not adopting an intercultural approach, even where teachers may acknowledge the significance of, and the need for, intercultural education (see Aguado, Ballesteros & Malik, 2003; Papamichael, 2009; Hajisoteriou & Angelides, 2016a). Research also suggests that this lack of confidence to deal with diversity issues results in their avoiding such issues (Arshad et al., 2005; Loader & Hughes, 2017). Based on his research into race equality issues in mainly White areas, Gaine (2005) explains that avoidance of dealing with these contentious issues may result in teachers treating all pupils in the same way to avoid being 'racist', perpetuating, thus, institutional discrimination. Recent research into intercultural education in Cyprus suggests that teachers' and headteachers' understandings of diversity and intercultural education lack conceptual clarity and theoretical agreement (Hajisoteriou & Angelides, 2016a). Moreover, as the authors argue, 'the lack of concrete state policies further confused the insufficiently and inappropriately trained school actors...thus impeding successful implementation [of intercultural education]' (ibid., p. 243). Hence, the lack of knowledge combined with a policy discourse that also lacks clarity and coherence seem to be key factors constraining teacher agency in taking forward intercultural education. The question remains as

to what kind of knowledge could assist teachers in developing intercultural education practices grounded in social justice and equity. And, is training sufficient for them to develop this knowledge? These questions are the focus of the next paragraphs.

Knowledge or understanding of intercultural education that can enable teacher agency in developing practice grounded in equity and social justice involves a theoretical understanding of the ways in which power and privilege operate (Gorski, 2006; Giroux, 2016 [2006]; Arshad, 2017). This seems to relate to what Pantić (2015) refers to as ‘competence’ in her model of teacher agency for social justice, which involves teachers’ understanding of the social forces that affect their practices and political literacy. This theoretical understanding has been described as key to border pedagogy (Giroux, 2016 [2006]) and to developing social justice thinking and practice (Arshad, 2017) and seems necessary for the ‘critical analysis of systems of power and privilege’ that can lead to comprehensive school reform for intercultural education grounded in social justice (Gorski, 2006). Leeman and Ledoux (2005) suggest that lack of this theoretical understanding may not enable teachers to ‘move beyond the dominant discourse of cultural difference’ (p. 576; see also Villegas and Lucas, 2002). In combination with the lack of resources, this may restrict their practices to pragmatic solutions to the dilemmas they encounter in their daily practice (ibid.). Arshad (2017) warns that even the practices of teachers who are committed to social justice and equity issues may result in being ad hoc, inconsistent and confused if they are not underpinned by an understanding of social justice concepts and theoretical frameworks. So, how can teachers develop this knowledge?

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) present three different conceptions of teacher learning: i. ‘knowledge – *for* – practice’, which refers to formal knowledge and theory for teachers to use; ii. ‘knowledge – *in* – practice’, which refers to practical knowledge, namely knowledge that is ‘embedded in practice and in teachers’ reflections on practice’; and iii. ‘knowledge-*of*-practice’, namely knowledge that is generated through the teachers’ engagement with their classrooms and schools

as ‘sites for intentional investigation’ and knowledge and theory developed by others as ‘generative material for interrogation and interpretation’ (p. 250).

Transmission of ‘knowledge – *for* – practice’ through training may have little impact on teachers’ practices (Sleeter, 1992; Pohan, 1996; Humes, 2003; Symeou et al., 2009; Hamilton, 2013), unless they are positively predisposed towards the values underlying intercultural education (Garmon, 2004) and ready to transform beliefs, attitudes and practices which they may have developed as a result of having grown up and having been educated in a monocultural environment. Johnson’s (2002) study into White teachers who exhibited an understanding of race and racism revealed that this understanding had developed through their personal experiences of marginalization due to class background or sexual orientation; through activism; and through living and working with non-Whites in relationships that approximated equal status and provided them with an insight into race and racism. It could be suggested that the understanding developed by these teachers corresponds to ‘knowledge – *in* – practice’, as it has developed through their experiences. However, Arshad (2017) argues that activism, personal experiences of marginalization and commitment to social justice do not necessarily entail the development of consistent practices that promote equity and social justice. Instead, she suggests that teachers need to develop a historical and contemporary understanding of social justice concepts that will enable them to engage with issues of diversity, social justice and inclusion in their daily practice. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) recommend teachers’ development of ‘inquiry as stance’ and the creation of ‘inquiry communities’, which enable teachers ‘to generate local knowledge, envision and theorize their practice, and interpret and interrogate the theory and research of others’ (p. 289). Engaging with multiple discourses stemming from the whole school community and cognitive resources and with their daily practices could assist teachers in local capacity building, by generating local ‘knowledge-*of*-practice’. Thus, they could collectively develop their professional agency and engage with policies in ways that are meaningful and relevant to their local context rather than merely identify the ways to best respond to predetermined ends. However, the extent to which this is feasible seems

to depend on the context in which the teachers work. This brings us to the next factor that affects teacher agency and policy enactment: the institutional context.

3.2.3 Institutional Context

The context in which teachers work plays a significant role in shaping teacher agency (Priestley et al., 2012, 2015; Pantić, 2015) and policy enactment (Helsby, 1999; Day, 2007; Maguire et al., 2010; Robinson, 2012). As Ball, Maguire and Braun (2012) argue, policies are ‘translated from text to action – put ‘into’ practice – in relation to history and to context, with the [help of the material and human] resources available’ (p. 3). Differences across schools, in terms of institutional histories and missions; school ethos and culture; leadership experiences; material resources, such as the buildings, local infrastructures, budgets and available technological equipment; and human resources, such as staffing profiles and pupil intake, contribute to shaping policy interpretations and enactments differently across schools (ibid.). As Pantić (2015) notes, the contingencies of the context - school, policy or the wider societal and cultural context – affect what teachers perceive as feasible and thus, how they exercise their agency.

This section focuses on the institutional context and is divided into two parts: i. institutional discourses ii. power relationships. The former part deals with the cultural aspect, while the latter deals with the structural aspect of schools. The specific themes have been chosen because they relate to the findings of this study.

3.2.3.1 Institutional Discourses

Institutional discourses, particularly in state schools, tend to have their origins in the official policy discourse. However, new policies are not introduced in a vacuum. ‘[T]here is a history of other policies, other languages and other subjectivities, a discursive archive’ on which teachers may draw to make sense of contemporary policy and as hundreds of policies coexist, different policies have

‘different status and reach’ (Ball et al., 2012, pp. 6-7). Different policies may promote even contradictory goals, resulting in contradictions, incoherence or confusion. As Ball (2006) notes, ‘the enactment of one [policy] may inhibit or contradict or influence the possibility of the enactment of others’ (p. 17). Therefore, the institutional history and relative status of each policy needs to be taken into account. Moreover, ‘[t]he form and extent of enactment will also depend to some extent on whether a policy is mandated, strongly recommended or suggested’ (Maguire et al., 2010, p. 157). Finally, the clarity of the policy text will also affect policy enactment (Robinson, 2012).

A characteristic example of the contradictions in the policy discourse is the tension between, on the one hand, the tendency in curriculum policy to acknowledge the significance of teacher agency for the quality of education (Biesta et al., 2015), and, on the other hand, the emphasis on accountability and performativity. Several scholars warn that reform processes that appear to re-professionalise teachers by ‘devolving authority’ and ‘providing flexibility’ may be a form of ‘re-regulation’ through curriculum output regulation; thus, they may represent ‘a new form of control’ that is less visible, a mode of ‘self-regulating regulation’ (Ball, 2003, p. 217; Beck, 2008). This is illustrated by the cases of Scotland and Cyprus where, despite the shifts in the policy discourse regarding teacher professionalism, the policies have left the cultural and structural conditions of the context in which teachers operate unaddressed, impeding, thus, teacher agency. Specifically, Priestley, Biesta and Robinson (2015) suggest that moving away from habitual ways of thinking and working appeared to be too risky for teachers in Scotland, who were still under the pressure to meet external performative demands and experienced intensified workload and general distrust. Centralised demands and pressures through accountability mechanisms tend to detract attention from the broader vision of what education is for and preoccupy teachers with the short-term, instrumental goals of education, which, as Biesta et al. (2015) suggest, ‘narrow consideration of what is possible, and frame subsequent action accordingly’ (p. 637). In Cyprus, there are no national exams in primary education, but, within the historically centralised education system, school inspectors and headteachers are the main decision-makers in schools (Hajisoteriou, 2010, 2012)

and supervise teachers' work. As Kontovourki, Theodorou and Philippou (2015) argue, despite the reframing of the teacher's role in the recent curriculum reform, the state retains its control over their work in practice in less visible ways, such as 'controll[ing] their time, space, and PD [professional development] content as well as PD at the school level through new experts' (p. 107), without, thus, encouraging teachers' critical engagement with the reform. Hence, '[d]espite the absence in Cyprus of overt systems of accountability, performativity or school effectiveness...teachers were constituted as autonomous professionals only to the extent that their 'autonomy' was performed within the confines set by the state' (ibid., p. 121). In this context, the coexistence of the conflicting ideologies of the long-established Hellenocentrism and the recently introduced and vague interculturalism in the policy discourse seems to further impede teacher agency for change (see 1.3). The examples of Scotland and Cyprus illustrate the contradictions within the system and the policy discourse. The conflicting education policy discourses, political demands and pressures on teachers, which are often reflected in competing institutional discourses, restrict teacher agency and possible policy enactments. As these countervailing pressures mediate teachers' justice-oriented concerns (Gewirtz, 2006), they are expected to affect constructions of intercultural education in schools.

However, teachers' active involvement in their professional development (Philippou et al., 2014) and a robust professional discourse about education (Priestley et al., 2015) seem to assist teachers in building a shield against the pressure and demands of conflicting policies and in confidently enacting their agency. To promote teacher agency in such a context of conflicting and often vague policy discourses, Biesta et al. (2015) underline the need for opportunities for systematic sense-making of policies and the collective development of agency at the school level. This turns the focus of attention to the structural dimension of schools, which is the focus of the next section.

3.2.3.2 Power Relations

The nature of power relations in schools affects the scope for possible interpretations and enactments of policies (Ball et al., 2012) and teacher agency (Pantić, 2015; Priestley et al., 2015).

On the one hand, ‘coercive relations of power’ characterized by mainly one-way flow of information and power restrict possibilities (Cummins, 2009, p. 45; Priestley et al., 2012, 2015). On the other hand, ‘collaborative relations of power’ can expand the scope of what is feasible (Cummins, 2009, p. 45; Priestley et al., 2012, 2015). In their research on teacher agency and curriculum reform in two high schools, Priestley, Biesta and Robinson (2012, 2015) found that differences regarding the relationships fostered by the school leader related to differences in the degrees of agency achieved by the teachers in each school. In the school with a rigid hierarchical culture, there was a lot of confusion and lack of confidence among teachers to engage with the reform (Priestley et al., 2015, p. 135). In the school where the school leader fostered horizontal relationships characterised by trust, collegiality, reciprocity, relative symmetry and longevity, the teachers were confident and exercised their agency. As Priestley et al. (2015) note, ‘teacher networks provide access to relational resources of various kinds, including support, access to new ideas and a protective shield when undertaking innovation’ (p. 135).

Numerous scholars (e.g. Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Helsby, 1999; Sachs, 2003; Robinson, 2012; Pantić, 2015) have underlined the significant role that relationships of collegiality, collaboration, mutual respect and trust can play for the development of teachers’ powerful professional agency even in the face of conflicting policies. For example, as mentioned earlier, based on a 3-year research into relationships of knowledge, inquiry and professional practice in urban inquiry communities, Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) suggest that inquiry communities aiming at the understanding, articulation and transformation of practices and social relations in schools can enable teachers to move beyond the mere identification of ways to best respond to externally determined ends and engage with reforms and

their underpinning assumptions. The creation of collaborative networks is also recommended by scholars in the fields of intercultural, multicultural and anti-racist education (e.g. Arshad et al., 2005; Cummins, 2009; Aguado & Malik, 2011; Mitakidou, 2011) and by national education policies, as evidenced by the MoEC's circular on intercultural education sent to schools in the year of my fieldwork (see F:7.1.19.1/16, 3 September 2013 – see 1.5). However, as Priestley, Biesta and Robinson (2015) warn, such school networks 'lose their value if they are simply used to push through predefined and restrictive agendas, if the collegiality is contrived (Hargreaves, 1993) or if they foster groupthink' (p. 135).

Key to the success of such efforts are time and space to build relationships characterised by trust, mutual respect and collegiality and develop a shared vision to drive collaborative action (Sachs, 2003). Time, however, seems to be the big challenge in the neoliberal era, when teachers' time and space seem to be restricted by the intensification of teachers' work, high demands for accountability, often the reduction of resources and generally, the increasing managerialism in schools, which seem to have replaced the former regulation through prescriptive curricula in several countries. The 'hierarchical and bureaucratic nature of the educational system' and 'resistance by those in position of power [e.g. the head teachers] to equity-oriented change' may restrict opportunities for the development of collaborative professional networks in schools and the enhancement of teacher agency (Villegas & Lucas, 2002, p.24). Various scholars (e.g. Gillborn & Mirza, 2000; Blair, 2002; Bishop, 2011; Theoharis & O'Toole, 2011; Tarozzi, 2014) underline the critical role of headteachers in driving educational change with respect to social justice issues. The school leader, their beliefs regarding their role and cultural diversity, and the kind of power relations they foster through their style of leadership seem to play a key role for enabling or restricting opportunities for teachers and the whole school community to build collaborative networks and engage with reforms and equity-oriented change.

Different styles of leadership carry different implications for power relations in schools, and thus, for teacher agency and policy enactment. School leadership can range from a single leadership style to a distributed style of leadership (see Gronn,

2002; Spillane, 2005). A growing body of research in schools (e.g. Harris, 2002; Copland, 2003; Bishop, 2011) suggests that the distribution of leadership can involve all members of the school community in the reform process. Thus, it can contribute to their collective capacity building, sense of ownership (Copland, 2003) and their empowerment to challenge the status quo (Bishop, 2011). School leadership can also range from transactional leadership, where the focus is on the smooth operation of schools, on the here and now (Zembylas & Iasonos, 2010; Hajisoteriou & Angelides, 2016a), to transformational (Blair, 2002) or social justice leadership (Theoharis, 2007), which places issues of diversity and social inclusion at the centre of the school vision and practices. Moving beyond binary divides, Blair (2002) suggests that leadership in multiethnic schools needs to achieve a balance between broad-based, democratic and, if needed, autocratic approaches. Based on the findings of a study exploring the features of ‘effective’ – in the sense of academic achievement - schools for minority ethnic groups in England, Blair (2002) underlines that school leaders need, on the one hand, ‘to consult widely and to take into account the many and varied opinions and perspectives’ and, on the other hand, ‘to be prepared to institute policies that may not be popular with all parents or members of staff’, remaining committed to the shared vision even in the face of resistance (p.190). Similarly, based on the study of an educational reform in New Zealand aiming at reducing educational disparities for minoritized pupils, Bishop (2011) concludes that ‘effective leaders support and foster committed, agentic educators’, by ‘inspir[ing] a shared vision, model[ling] the way forward, enabl[ing] others to act, and challeng[ing] the status quo’ (p. 37). A shared school vision and focused and clear school policies are repeatedly cited in the literature as being of primary importance for the development of a commitment to equity and social justice (Gillborn & Mirza, 2000), a culturally responsive school ethos (Johnson, 2003) and the institutionalization of intercultural education (Leeman, 2003; Gorski, 2006). Hence, the school leadership plays a decisive role in shaping power relations, teacher agency and engagement with social justice issues in schools.

To sum up, power relations in schools carry implications for teacher agency and policy enactment. On the one hand, a rigid hierarchical culture, where there is

mainly one-way flow of information and power and teachers work in isolation seems to disempower staff members and by extension, the whole school community, as '[a]lienated and discouraged teachers can hardly be expected to help students become empowered, critical thinkers' (Nieto & Bode, 2012, p. 133). Teachers working in such conditions are unlikely to develop and sustain new teaching practices (Bishop, 2011). On the other hand, an inclusive culture, namely 'a secure, accepting, collaborating, stimulating community, in which everyone is valued', and which 'develops shared inclusive values that...guide decisions about policies and moment to moment practice in classrooms' can support staff members in achieving sustainable changes in policies and practice (Booth & Ainscow, 2002, p.8). Such a culture is more likely to support teachers in developing their collective capacity to act as agents of change.

Despite the significant role of the institutional context, which can enable or constrain policy enactment and generally, developments in teaching and learning, it tends to be overlooked in policy making and in educational research (Ball et al., 2012). In educational research, it is often treated as the backdrop against which the research takes place (ibid.), as is evidenced in several studies on intercultural education in Cyprus (see 3.4).

The next section explores the impact of the wider socio-political and historical context on teacher agency and policy enactment.

3.2.4 Historical and Socio-Political Context

The historical and socio-political context in which the schools and teachers are embedded is another factor that shapes teacher agency and policy enactment. The wider context mediates concerns of justice (Gewirtz, 2006) and constructions of intercultural education (Bleszynska, 2008).

The discourses available in the historical and socio-political context in which teachers live and work may influence their beliefs and understandings of reality,

which, in turn, affect policy enactment. For example, migrants are often portrayed as posing either material or symbolic threat to host societies in the media and far-right political discourse (see 1.2.2 about Cyprus) - material threat refers to competition for resources, such as taking the locals' jobs, while symbolic threat refers to a threat in social status and power (Esses, Dovidio, Jackson & Armstrong, 2001). Such discourses form part of the repertoire of discourses teachers can draw on to interpret and construct the social world. Drawing on such discourses and thus, perceiving migrants as a threat to the society can result in teachers' resistance to intercultural education (see Chircu & Negreanu, 2010; Llurda & Lasagabaster, 2010; Bleszynska, 2011; Papamichael, 2011).

Hegemonic discourses and structures in teachers' historical and socio-political context combined with their life and professional experiences may constrain teachers' capacity, and possibly willingness, to engage with alternative possibilities. For example, in Cyprus, the unresolved conflict; the division between the two main ethnic communities, the Greek-Cypriots and the Turkish-Cypriots; and the long-established dominance of Hellenocentrism in Greek-Cypriot education and society seem to affect teachers' responses to policies that challenge established ways of thinking and acting (e.g. see Charalambous et al., 2013, 2014; Philippou et al., 2014). Most teachers' resistance to the policy initiative that aimed at promoting 'a culture of peaceful coexistence' between the Greek-Cypriot and the Turkish-Cypriot communities in 2008 led Charalambous et al. (2014) to conclude that 'the decades-long domination of the Hellenocentric discourse and the saturation of Greek-Cypriot education with the hegemonic discourse of 'I don't forget' still provides an adverse socio-political setting for the embracement and enactment of the new policy' (p. 97). Even the few teachers who wanted to promote the new initiative considered it rather 'risky' and expressed their 'fear' of being accused by parents of being 'traitors' or of 'do[ing] leftist propaganda in the classroom', as the discourse of 'rapprochement' is linked to the leftist party of AKEL (Charalambous et al., 2013, p. 76). Similarly, in Philippou, Kontovourki and Theodorou's (2014) study of 66 primary school teachers' sense of professionalism in the process of curriculum reform, many teachers underlined the need for a unified body of centrally determined teaching material as 'a shield

against (parental) interference or involvement in teacher decisions or choices’ (p. 621). The researchers suggest that this could relate to the ‘deep political divisions among Greek-Cypriots’ due to the ongoing political conflict in the ethnically divided Cypriot society. These examples indicate the Greek-Cypriot teachers’ sense of vulnerability and anxiety in experimenting and diverting from the safety of the established educational practices, especially with reference to ideological issues. Their socio-political and historical context seems to constrain their agency and affect the ways in which they respond to new policies.

Having presented the factors that affect policy enactment and teacher agency, making links to Cypriot and international research on intercultural education and cultural diversity, the next section focuses on the Cypriot context. It reviews key studies on intercultural education and cultural diversity mainly in the last decade, identifies the research gaps and outlines the contribution of the present study to this field in Cyprus.

PART B Research on Intercultural Education and Cultural Diversity in Cyprus

3.3 Review of Empirical Studies on Intercultural Education and Cultural Diversity in Cyprus

Intercultural education is a relatively new concept in Greek-Cypriot education (Panayiotopoulos & Nicolaidou, 2007; Zembylas, 2012) and while there is a growing body of research in this field, it is still limited (Papamichael, 2011).

Research on intercultural education in Cyprus focuses at the macro-level on the area of national education policy making (e.g. Hajisoteriou, Neophytou & Angelides, 2012; Hajisoteriou & Angelides, 2013, 2016); at the meso-level on exploring the views and strategies at the level of inspectors and / or headteachers, who are responsible for overseeing the implementation of new national policies and guiding teachers, (e.g. Zembylas & Iasonos, 2010, 2016, 2017; Hajisoteriou, 2012; Hajisoteriou & Angelides, 2014, 2016); and at the micro-level, the focus is

on the school and the classroom (e.g. Panayiotopoulos & Nicolaidou, 2007; Zembylas, 2010b, 2010d, 2010e, 2011; Papamichael, 2011; Partasi, 2011; Theodorou, 2011; Theodorou & Symeou, 2013). Recently, Hajisoteriou and Angelides (2016a), whose work focuses on intercultural education, have attempted to bridge the macro-level of intercultural education policy (supranational and state level) with the micro-level (school) in their book *The Globalisation of Intercultural Education: The Politics of Macro-Micro Integration*. Several studies have also drawn links between the socio-political context, specifically the unresolved conflict, and constructions of ‘Turkishness’ in schools (e.g. Spyrou, 2002, 2006; Zembylas, 2010b, 2010d, 2010e, 2011; Theodorou & Symeou, 2013). However, the interplay between the institutional context and, particularly, the structural aspects of schools (e.g. power, relationships), and constructions of intercultural education is under-researched. Having already discussed intercultural education at the national education policy level in chapter 1, I will provide an overview of what we already know regarding conceptualisations and constructions of cultural diversity and intercultural education in this section, based on key research in Greek-Cypriot schools undertaken mainly in the last decade. Relevant research, which is mostly qualitative, focuses on teachers’ understandings of, and approaches to, cultural diversity and intercultural education; children’s constructions of the Self and the Other; minority ethnic children’s experiences in schools; children’s understandings of intercultural education; and headteachers’ understandings of, and approaches to, cultural diversity and intercultural education.

3.3.1 Teachers’ Conceptualisations and Constructions of Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Education

As regards teachers’ conceptualisations and constructions of cultural diversity, research underlines teachers’ essentialist understandings of culture and identity (e.g. Zembylas, 2010d; Papamichael, 2011; Theodorou & Symeou, 2013). Research that focuses on schools with Turkish-speaking pupils shows the

prevalence of negative discourses and practices towards these children (e.g. Symeou et al., 2009; Zembylas, 2010b, 2010d, 2010f), who are categorized as members of the enemy group (Zembylas, 2010d). Based on a two-year ethnographic study in four Greek-Cypriot schools with Turkish-speaking pupils, Zembylas (2010b, 2010c, 2010d, 2010e, 2010f, 2010g, 2011) extensively analyses how Greek-Cypriot teachers' and pupils' discourses and practices are informed by and reinforce dominant historically, politically and socially constructed hierarchies. Most teachers perceived Turkish-speaking children in racialized, ethnicized and classed ways and some admitted their racism, which they regarded as justified due to the political situation in Cyprus (Zembylas, 2010f). Focusing on one of these schools, Zembylas (2010b) found that teachers held low expectations of Turkish-speaking children (see also Symeou et al., 2009); policies were adjusted in ways that favoured majoritized pupils, thus, keeping Greek-Cypriot parents pleased; and incidents of othering and isolation of Turkish-speaking pupils by their majoritised peers remained unaddressed. Zembylas (2011) suggests that teachers' justification of racist actions or failure to recognize and address racism in everyday interactions reflects the accommodation of racism 'within a framework of racial and ethnic superiority for security, survival or other justifications' (p. 158). However, there were cases of resistance to the prevailing negative constructions of Turkish-speaking children exhibited by some teachers' and a headteacher's counter-stories and counter-practices (Zembylas, 2010f). While in one of these schools, where a 'culture of resentment' held sway, there was no space for critical voices to be expressed (Zembylas, 2010b), in another school, teachers were enabled to move beyond their experiences of discomfort, ambivalence, anxiety and frustration and engage with alternative possibilities (Zembylas, 2010g). In the latter school, the headteacher, driven by a justice-oriented vision, systematically engaged teachers in challenging their taken-for-granted assumptions about diversity and their feelings of discomfort. This suggests the important role that the institutional context can play in shaping teachers' conceptualizations and constructions of cultural diversity.

Similarly, research in multiethnic schools with asylum seekers and / or migrants found that teachers constructed these groups in primarily negative, stereotypical

and / or deficit ways (e.g. Panayiotopoulos and Nicolaidou, 2007; Angelides, Stylianou and Leigh, 2004; Zembylas, 2010g; Papamichael, 2011; Theodorou, 2011). Papamichael's (2011) ethnographic study on intercultural education discourses and practices in an urban Greek-Cypriot primary school with a mixed population, consisting of Greek-Cypriots, Eastern European migrants and newly-arrived Iraqi-Palestinian asylum-seekers, found that teachers constructed migrants and asylum seekers as unavoidable, intolerable and / or dangerous. The teachers rarely described them as possibly beneficial and expressed feelings of empathy. Although Papamichael argues that these constructions were influenced by popular public and media discourses, she suggests that there could also be a relation between institutional discourses about the Other and teachers' constructions of the Other, but this requires further investigation. Teachers have also often portrayed migrants as a threat to the national and cultural identity of the Greek-Cypriots (Zembylas, 2010g; Hajisoteriou, 2013). Colour-blind, deficit or additive approaches to cultural diversity and minimizations, justifications or even denials of racism have been recorded by qualitative studies in multiethnic schools (e.g. Papamichael, 2011; Theodorou, 2011; Hajisoteriou, 2013). Teachers' approaches to migrant pupils mainly focused on the children's Greek language proficiency, while the significance of their cultural capital was ignored and even underestimated (Panayiotopoulos & Nicolaidou, 2007; Theodorou, 2011; Hajisoteriou, 2013). However, teachers' discourses and practices in relation to cultural diversity have often been found to be characterized by contradictions, ambivalences and ambiguities (Hajisoteriou, 2010, 2012; Papamichael, 2011; Theodorou, 2011). Based on interviews with 30 teachers from four primary schools, Hajisoteriou (2012) argues that teachers often held 'container concepts' of diversity and intercultural education. While most teachers associated diversity with values, such as respect, equity and tolerance, and suggested that the provision of equal educational opportunities was the major objective of their teaching, many teachers also argued that 'cultural characteristics were of minor importance to them and their local students' (p. 135). Based on her ethnographic study in a primary school, where 26% of the pupils were bilingual non-Greek-Cypriots, Theodorou (2011) notes that the 'teachers employed a liberal ideology of equal

opportunity, treatment, and tolerance to rationalize the social exclusion of immigrant students at the school' (p. 517). Leaving power and structural inequalities unacknowledged and unaddressed, such approaches, which are grounded in the politics of equal dignity, result in reproducing differences and inequalities that further reinforce oppression and exclusion (Gillborn, 2004; Arshad et al., 2005— see chapter 2 for a detailed critique).

According to studies before the curriculum reform, the main constraints to teacher agency in taking intercultural education forward include: the monoculturalist and nationalist ethos prescribed by the education system (Angelides, Stylianou & Leigh, 2004; Hajisoteriou, 2010; Papamichael, 2011); teachers' essentialist understandings of diversity (e.g. Zembylas, 2010d, 2010f; Papamichael, 2011; Theodorou & Symeou, 2013); and the centrality of Orthodox Christianity in education, which leaves no space for other religions (Papamichael, 2011; Partasi, 2011). Several studies have underlined the nationalist character of the Greek-Cypriot education and the othering discourses permeating it through textbooks (e.g. Papadakis, 2008), teacher-pupil interactions (e.g. Spyrou, 2002, 2006), school ceremonies (e.g. Zembylas, 2013) and policies (e.g. Theodorou, 2014). Despite Cyprus' accession to the EU since 2004 and the emphasis on the Europeanization of education in the educational reform processes, Philippou (2009) underscores that:

Although "Europe" provides a framework from which policy documents increasingly draw to introduce curricular innovation,...[n]ationalistic discourses of citizenship "appropriate" "Europe" in ways which legitimize both ethno- and Euro-centrism and which fail to alleviate existing tensions between ethno-national and state identities in Cyprus (p. 199).

The unresolved political conflict appears to legitimize and sustain nationalistic discourses which appear to influence many teachers' understandings of the Turks and generally, of 'Turkishness', as reflected by several teachers' open acknowledgment of and / or even justification of racism against certain Others for security and survival (e.g. Zembylas, 2010f, 2011). Moreover, it appears to reinforce some of the teachers' beliefs about the need for migrant pupils to assimilate, so that they do not pose a threat to the Greek-Cypriot culture and to

social stability (e.g. Theodorou, 2011; Hajisoteriou, 2013). Furthermore, Greek-Cypriot teachers' socialisation in an ethnocentric environment (Angelides, Stylianou & Leigh, 2003; Hajisoteriou, 2012); their lack of experience of teaching in multiethnic classrooms (Panayiotopoulos & Nicolaidou, 2007) and their being ill-prepared to do so due to the limited opportunities for teacher training in the area of intercultural education (Angelides, Stylianou & Leigh, 2004; Symeou et al., 2009; Papamichael, 2011; Theodorou, 2011) seemed to contribute to their feelings of powerlessness, helplessness and anxiety to deal with cultural diversity issues (e.g. Symeou et al., 2009; Zembylas, 2010g; Theodorou, 2011). These feelings seem to be reinforced by the fact that teachers are left to their own devices to determine whether and how to implement intercultural education (Eteokleous & Christodoulou, 2010; Hajisoteriou, 2010; Zembylas & Lesta, 2011). At the same time, by identifying the intercultural education policy with remedial Greek language teaching, the MoEC seemed to narrow teachers' understandings and constructions of intercultural education (Theodorou & Symeou, 2013).

Despite these constraints, teachers can achieve agency and engage with intercultural education in ways that extend beyond additive approaches (e.g. Eteokleous and Christodoulou, 2010; Theodorou & Symeou, 2013; Charalambous, Zembylas and Charalambous, 2016). Specifically, Eteokleous and Christodoulou's (2010) interviews with seven primary school teachers revealed teachers' anti-essentialist understandings of identity and conceptualisations of intercultural education that extended beyond Greek language learning and encompassed differentiated teaching, children's social inclusion and the 'marriage of the cultures' (p. 57). All these teachers had studied abroad and worked in two schools with a high percentage of minority ethnic pupils. The researchers argue that these experiences had helped the teachers understand the essence of intercultural education despite the absence of relevant training. It is uncertain whether these teachers' practices challenged structural inequalities, as there was no reference to power issues in the evidence provided and, according to Eteokleous and Christodoulou (2010), 'all participant teachers directed their energies into stimulating and favoring a process of [cultural] exchange' (p. 59). Nevertheless, these teachers' constructions of identity and intercultural education

differed from the predominantly colour-blind and deficit approaches of teachers recorded in many of the aforementioned studies.

While Eteokleous and Christodoulou's (2010) study underlines the role of the teachers' personal and professional experiences of diversity in enabling teacher agency in taking intercultural education forward, other studies reveal the role of the context. Specifically, comparing their findings from the ethnographic study of a primary school with a considerable percentage of bilingual non-Greek-Cypriot pupils (26%) and a case study of a ZEP primary school, where almost half of the pupils were Roma, Theodorou and Symeou (2013) suggest that the teachers in the ZEP school exhibited knowledge of contemporary intercultural education perspectives, cultural awareness and sensitivity and seemed to make self-initiated efforts through their teaching content and practices to include all pupils in the school learning community, despite their racist beliefs and deficit views of Roma children. In contrast, the ethnographic study of the mainstream school revealed that, despite the fact that the teachers were overall quite sympathetic towards their migrant pupils' difficulties, most teachers felt helpless and powerless to assist them and employed a difference-blind approach, making no educational accommodations for non-Cypriot pupils (Theodorou, 2011). Although this is not a difference focused upon by Theodorou and Symeou (2013), as the focus of this comparative study was indigenous minority and migrant children's experiences in the two schools, the differences in teachers' practices across the two schools suggest that contextual factors and their interplay with teachers' constructions of intercultural education merit further investigation. Charalambous, Zembylas and Charalambous (2016) note that the situational context in which diversity is addressed may also affect how it is constructed. Specifically, drawing on ethnographic data from a 2nd grade (6-7-year olds) literacy classroom, Charalambous et al. (2016) observe that diversity was largely recognised and discussed unproblematically in ordinary lessons. The teacher drew on culturally diverse pupils' experiences and 'was willing to negotiate more inclusive categories that challenged, to an extent, the solidified categories of "us" (Greek-Cypriots) and "others"' (p. 60). However, in ceremonial activities commemorating the conflict, the teacher tended to represent 'us' and 'others' in stereotypical ways and

treated diversity, especially when related to Turkishness, as problematic. This reveals the complexities involved in dealing with diversity issues in a conflict-affected context. Although dissonance across and within teachers' discourses and practices of intercultural education has also been recorded by other studies (e.g. Zembylas, 2010f; Papamichael, 2011), factors related to the individual teachers and their institutional context which may enable or disable teacher agency in developing intercultural practices are not explored in depth.

Since the reform, there has been very limited research in teachers' constructions of cultural diversity and intercultural education. A key study is Hajisoteriou and Angelides' (2014, 2015, 2016) project focusing on the Europeanization of Cypriot intercultural education. Their study, which took place the same year as mine, involved interviews with the headteacher and two teachers from each of twenty schools across Cyprus with high percentages of migrant pupils. They also engaged in observations of each teachers' practices for five teaching periods. Many teachers were found to have 'ambiguous perceptions of diversity indicative of a container concept of diversity and intercultural education' (p. 201), which echoes Leeman and Ledoux's (2005) findings regarding Dutch teachers' understandings of intercultural education. Hajisoteriou and Angelides argue that most teachers employed two contrasting approaches simultaneously. The first approach was a multicultural lens, which emphasized the celebration of diversity, and the second a monocultural lens, whereby diversity was constructed as a 'problem'. The lesson observations revealed that most teachers took a 'business-as-usual' approach, ignoring the diversity in their classes. The teachers provided several reasons for adopting a monocultural lens, such as the fact that the curriculum ignored cultural diversity, the lack of material for intercultural education, the lack of time due to the overloaded syllabus and large class sizes, and lack of professional experience and preparation. Occasionally, some teachers tried to differentiate their teaching practices and materials in response to their culturally and linguistically diverse pupils' needs, using additive and contributory approaches. As regards the headteachers, their findings revealed the existence of three categories depending on their approach to multiculturalism and their leadership style:

- (i) headteachers who held deficit views of difference and exhibited a transactional leadership style that aimed at the smooth operation of the school through the assimilation of migrant pupils into the dominant culture;
- (ii) headteachers who advocated cultural pluralism and tended to employ a transformational leadership style, trying to transform the school culture by involving migrant parents and building links with the community; and
- (iii) headteachers who held ‘container concepts’ of diversity, reflecting both cultural deficit and cultural pluralist approaches, and claimed that they tried to accommodate cultural diversity by creating collaborative networks in schools; yet, in practice, they were found to promote assimilation.

Despite these differences across headteachers, it is not known whether there was any correlation between the headteachers’ different approaches to multiculturalism and leadership styles and the teachers’ understandings of cultural diversity and intercultural education and relevant practices, as the findings regarding teachers and headteachers are presented separately and no information is provided about the institutional contexts, besides the fact that all schools had high concentrations of migrant pupils.

3.3.2 Children and Cultural Diversity

As regards Greek-Cypriot children’s constructions of the ethnic Self and the ethnic Other, Theodorou and Symeou’s (2013) study reveals Greek-Cypriot children’s narrow understandings of national identity, which excluded the diaspora (Pontian Greeks) and other groups of the Cypriot community, such as the Roma. As Theodorou and Symeou (2013) observe, ‘Cypriotness for Greek-Cypriot children was equated with Greek-Cypriotness and precluded its co-existence with any elements associated with Turkishness’ (p. 368). Ethnographic studies in primary schools have suggested Greek-Cypriot children’s constructions of the Turks as the

enemy, as ‘the primary Other’ against whom the Greek-Cypriot identity is constructed (e.g. Spyrou, 2002, 2006; Zembylas, 2010c, 2010d). Furthermore, Turkish-speaking children are constructed as “‘Turks” (the arch-enemy of the Greeks) and dark-coloured and unclean (associated with a lower culture, race and socioeconomic class)’, except for the ones who spoke, dressed and behaved like the majority group members (Zembylas, 2010c, p. 319). However, in Zembylas’ (2010c) study, some Greek-Cypriot children acted as Turkish-speaking pupils’ allies and ‘stood up for what they thought was inappropriate treatment of their Turkish-speaking classmates’ (ibid., p. 323). Spyrou’s (2006) interviews with children outside school show that Greek-Cypriot children do not merely reproduce the stereotypes about the Turks promoted by the dominant Greek-Cypriot ideology but also produce new, alternative and, in some cases, even conflicting understandings. As he argues, contextual parameters affect the ways in which children choose to construct the Turks.

Besides the ‘Turks’, research has revealed Greek-Cypriot children’s constructions of migrants and other ethnic groups in primarily essentialist terms (Spyrou, 2009; Papamichael, 2011; Zembylas & Lesta, 2011; Philippou & Theodorou, 2014). Exploring Greek-Cypriot primary school pupils’ discourses about national others drawing upon two different studies, Philippou and Theodorou (2014) found that the children used the concept of ‘Europe’ ‘to distinguish, evaluate and hierarchise various others and to reproduce ethnic, racial, and Eurocentric stereotypes of national outgroups and their immigrant classmates from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds’ (p. 266). The children viewed ‘us’ as having achieved the European standards as EU members, while they had ‘an “imperialist”, Eurocentric, modernist understanding of “others” [like Turkey] who have to adjust to European standards so as to become included’ (p. 284). As Spyrou (2009) notes, ‘[t]he ambiguity that Greek-Cypriots feel about their European identity – being geographically and culturally on the margins of Europe... is partly resolved through their assertion of superiority over non-European “others”’ (p. 159). However, neither all Europeans nor all non-Europeans are understood in the same way. For instance, Philippou and Theodorou (2014) found that children had a more positive stance towards Western European countries than Eastern European ones.

Nonetheless, the children were negative even towards Western Europeans if the latter were understood as having had a negative impact on Cyprus historically. For instance, conflicting and mixed views were expressed about England, due to colonialism. Moreover, Zembylas and Lesta's (2011) interviews with 30 Greek-Cypriot primary and secondary school pupils showed that, although they often portrayed Turks, Turkish-Cypriots and migrants as a threat, they were ambivalent regarding immigration and they drew on various discourses about migrants ranging from respect, appreciation and friendship to discrimination and racism. Similarly, contradictions and ambivalences were recorded in Spyrou's (2009) study of 10-12-year-old children's perceptions of, and attitudes towards, Sri Lankan and Filipino women who are employed as domestic workers in Cyprus. These studies show that children's understandings of the Self and the Other are not static, rigid and fixed and that they often struggled to negotiate social changes due to immigration.

Several factors were found to affect Greek-Cypriot young people's constructions of different Others by Stevens' (2016) mixed methods study on the relationship between national pride and ethnic prejudice in Cyprus. Specifically, the young people who identified as Cypriot tended not to hold strong stereotypes towards ethnic out-groups. In contrast, the ones who identified as Greek were much more negative towards the Turks, including Turkish-Cypriots and Muslims, to whom they attached stereotypes, such as 'violent, aggressive, dominant and intolerant' (ibid., p.129). Moreover, they tended to be more negative towards migrants, such as Eastern Europeans, Asians and Africans, whom they perceived as a threat to their culture and economic resources. As Stevens (2016) explains, the Cypriot identity includes the subcategories of Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots and 'allows for more variability in terms of sub-forms of ethnic identification and shared boundary markers' (p. 128). In contrast, 'the Greek identity draws its content from a Hellenic Greek (racialized national) identity and emphasizes cultural homogeneousness and superiority' (ibid.). Furthermore, Greek-Cypriots who self-identified as refugees were more negative towards the Turks and the Turkish-Cypriots, but not towards the migrants. The school and the family influenced Greek-Cypriot young people's perceptions of, and attitudes towards,

Others, by ‘making particular cultural scripts about the collective Self and other available and meaningful to young people in the context of Cyprus’ (p. 133). Institutional features, such as the ethnic composition of schools and the nature of school policies in relation to anti-racism and multiculturalism, were found to influence pupils’ ethnic prejudice and interethnic relationships in the two private Greek-Cypriot schools studied, where Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot children were co-educated. Finally, the social networks the young people belonged to were also found to influence which cultural scripts the young people chose to draw ethnic in- and out-group boundaries.

As regards minority ethnic pupils’ experiences in Greek-Cypriot schools, research has repeatedly recorded the existence of what is described as ‘racial microaggressions’ in international literature, namely ‘verbal or behavioural indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults’ (Sue et al., 2007, p. 278). Research in schools with Turkish-speaking pupils found that these pupils, especially Roma, experience marginalization, racial prejudice, discrimination and /or bullying in their relationships with their peers (e.g. Symeou et al., 2009; Zembylas, 2010b, 2011; Theodorou & Symeou, 2013). Similarly, Papamichael (2011) found that the institutional, teachers’ and children’s discourses and everyday practices contributed to the differential racialization of migrant and asylum-seeking children as groups and individuals, which resulted in many minoritized children experiencing school as ‘an environment of harassment’ (p.241). As social actors, minority ethnic children use several strategies to negotiate racism (e.g. Zembylas, 2010c; Papamichael, 2011; Theodorou & Symeou, 2013; Stevens et al., 2015). For instance, Papamichael’s (2011) study identified three resistance strategies:

- i. assimilation strategies, such as jokes, lying about their national origin, denying their first language, and participating in majoritized religious practices;
- ii. violent reactions;
- iii. and, in one case, challenging of racialized name calling practices by Greek-Cypriot children in support of their minoritized classmates (p. 203).

The ways in which minority ethnic pupils use their agency to negotiate racism and their positioning relates to the context and the historical and cultural trajectory of the group they belong to and its relation to the majority group (Theodorou & Symeou, 2013; Stevens et al., 2015). Institutional features, such as the size, the ethnic composition of the pupil population and the school's anti-racist policies and whether the racist incidents take place in school or out of school are suggested by Stevens et al. (2015) as factors that appeared to relate to the variability in the strategies Turkish-Cypriot secondary school children used to respond to racism in their study. As Theodorou and Symeou (2013) underline, '[a]s persons-in-contexts, children may resist oppression in one context but feel empowered by conforming to cultural norms in another' (p. 354). The importance of the context for children's development is underlined by Bronfenbrenner's (1994) ecological systems theory, which suggests that although proximal processes affect children's development, the influence of such processes is contingent on the broader context in which they are embedded. Drawing on this theory, Brown (2017) suggests that children's interactions with teachers and peers can affect the way they view themselves, but the significance of these interactions may be enhanced or reduced based on the features of the institutional context, such as the ethnic composition of the pupil population. Despite the importance of the context for shaping the ways in which and the extent to which children negotiate their positionings, there is scarce research into the ways in which the institutional context influences children's choices in Cyprus (Stevens et al., 2015).

As part of their research project investigating the Europeanisation of Cypriot intercultural education policy, Hajisoteriou and Angelides (2016a) explored twenty 6th grade Greek-Cypriot and twenty migrant children's understandings and experiences of intercultural education and Hajisoteriou, Karousiou and Angelides (2017) explored these children's conceptualisations of cultural diversity. The children conceptualised intercultural education as collaborative learning, language learning and class discussions about diversity and cultural issues. Several Greek-Cypriot and migrant children were critical of the insufficient Greek language support provided to other-language-speaking children. At the same time, however, Greek-Cypriot children underestimated the significance of their migrant peers'

cultures and languages, reflecting, thus, deficit views of difference. In fact, Hajisoteriou, Karousiou and Angelides (2017) identified two main conceptualisations of cultural diversity among children: the cultural-deficit and the cultural-celebration perspective. As regards the former perspective, many Cypriot children conceptualised cultural diversity as linguistic pluralism, which was, however, presented as ‘a barrier to the smooth operation of their classrooms and their schools’ (p. 339). Furthermore, ‘language difficulties and / or “inappropriate” behaviour’ were cited by most Cypriot children as barriers to the inclusion of migrants in their friendship groups (p. 340). On the other hand, many migrant children reported their exclusion and racist incidents against them were reported by both migrant and Cypriot children. Many migrant and Cypriot children also adopted the second perspective ‘conceptualis[ing] cultural diversity as the existence of diverse, fixed and community-bound cultures that should be ‘celebrated’ by and within the local society’ (p.343). Few Cypriot and migrant children took an ‘intercultural-exchange perspective’, underlining the intercultural interaction and learning that stemmed from the development of interethnic friendships. However, the factors that may have contributed to these children’s choices and whether and to what extent institutional features, as suggested by Stevens (2016), may have contributed to the development of interethnic friendships is not known, as very limited information about the schools is provided. Moreover, although Hajisoteriou et al. (2017) present these three perspectives as representing both Greek-Cypriot and migrant children’s perspectives, they seem to reflect mainly the Greek-Cypriot children’s perspectives, as illustrated by the cultural-deficit perspective. Although, according to the data presented, migrant children experience marginalisation and racial prejudice, this does not necessarily entail that these children view cultural diversity as a deficiency. As several studies presented above suggest, many migrant children achieve agency in negotiating racism.

3.3.3 School Leadership and Intercultural Education

Besides teachers and children, there is a growing interest in school leadership in multi-ethnic schools (e.g. Hajisoteriou, 2010, 2012; Zembylas & Iasonos, 2010, 2017; Hajisoteriou & Angelides, 2013, 2016). These studies indicate the prevalence of a transactional leadership style combined with assimilatory approaches (Hajisoteriou, 2010, 2012; Zembylas & Iasonos, 2010). Nevertheless, there is evidence that there is some variability across headteachers and that there are headteachers who advocate cultural pluralism and exhibit a transformational leadership style (Hajisoteriou and Angelides, 2013, 2016) and headteachers who espouse a critical multicultural approach and exhibit signs of a social justice leadership style (Zembylas and Iasonos, 2010, 2017). As these studies are based on interviews with individual headteachers and the everyday practice and experiences of teachers and pupils remain unknown, the interplay between the school leadership and constructions of intercultural education in the school needs further investigation.

3.3.4 Research Gaps and Contribution of this Study

My literature review has identified some gaps in the current state of research in the field of intercultural education. Specifically, parents' perspectives seem to have been largely overlooked, with the exception of very few studies (e.g. Panayiotopoulos & Nicolaidou, 2007; Symeou et al., 2009; Zembylas, 2010d; Hajisoteriou & Angelides, 2016b). Furthermore, 'research focusing on children's voices has not thoroughly examined children's understandings and conceptualisations of cultural diversity' in Cyprus (Hajisoteriou, Karousiou & Angelides, 2017, p. 336). Moreover, research in the field of intercultural education in the Cypriot context draws links between the national political, socio-cultural, and education policy context and conceptualisations and constructions of cultural diversity and intercultural education in schools, but it has not paid sufficient attention to how features of the institutional context interact with individual teachers' beliefs, values and knowledge, enabling or constraining teacher agency

in taking intercultural education forward. Moreover, research in this field has mainly focused on schools with high concentrations of minority ethnic pupils, while, to my knowledge, there is no research in schools with predominantly Greek-Cypriot pupils, although it has been suggested that the composition of the pupil population is one of the institutional features that may affect policy enactment (Ball, Maguire & Braun, 2012), ethnic prejudice and interethnic relationships (Stevens, 2016) and the ways in which children negotiate their identity (Brown, 2017).

The present study will build on the existing research in this field and contribute to it by taking an ecological approach (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Priestley et al., 2015), paying attention to the institutional context and examining the ways in which this enables or constrains teachers' and children's agency in relation to constructions of cultural diversity and intercultural education in Greek-Cypriot primary schools.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the key individual and contextual factors that shape policy enactment and teacher agency, making links to Cypriot and international studies related to intercultural education. Taking into account the interplay of these factors allows a more comprehensive understanding of teachers' responses to the Cypriot intercultural education policy and their constructions of cultural diversity and intercultural education in Greek-Cypriot primary schools.

The chapter also reviewed key studies on cultural diversity and intercultural education in Greek-Cypriot schools mainly in the last decade. It, thus, presented the backdrop against which the present study took place, outlined the research gaps that emerged from this literature review and explained the contribution of the present study to the existing research in the field of intercultural education in Cyprus.

Based on this literature review, this study argues that there is a need for research into intercultural education in schools, which explores the interplay between the institutional context – the cultural and structural aspects of schools - and the teachers' and children's discourses, practices and everyday interactions in relation to cultural diversity. Taking into account the historical, political, sociocultural, economic and national education context (chapter 1) and using the theoretical framework presented in chapter 2, this study attempts to address the aforementioned gap by taking an ecological approach in its critical examination of cultural diversity and intercultural education in Greek-Cypriot primary schools after the recent curriculum reform. This ecological approach allows the exploration of whether and to what extent the shifts in the policy discourse have brought about, or have started bringing about, shifts in the cultures and structures of Greek-Cypriot primary schools that enable teachers to cross the double borders that the historically highly centralised, nationalist and monocultural Greek-Cypriot education system has constructed: the borders between 'us' – the civil servants – and 'them' – the experts (the MoEC) - and the borders between 'us' – the Greek-Cypriots – and 'them' – the Others. This border-crossing seems key to enabling the teachers to move beyond established primarily difference-blind, deficit and additive approaches to cultural diversity recorded in many of the aforementioned studies and adopt more inclusive, intercultural practices. The next chapter discusses the methodology I have used to achieve the aim of this study.

This chapter presents the methodological framework of this study as well as the data collection and the data analysis processes. After presenting the research aim and questions (4.1), the philosophical assumptions that have informed this research are outlined (4.2) and the choice of a qualitative approach (4.3.1) is explained. I expound on my decision to design critical ethnographic case studies of intercultural education in three schools (4.3.2) and I acknowledge the major critiques of the methodological approach chosen and present my response to them (4.3.3).

The chapter, then, turns to a discussion of the operationalization of this framework in the field. After I explain my approach to sampling (4.4.1) and how I gained access to the field (4.4.2), the research methods are thoroughly discussed (4.5), providing the rationale for employing the specific methods and considering their limitations. Next, the data collection process is delineated (4.6).

The chapter continues by outlining my approach to data analysis (4.7), followed by a discussion regarding the validity and reliability of this research (4.8) and the ethical considerations and dilemmas encountered throughout the research (4.9). The chapter ends with my critical reflections on my multiple roles and identities in the field and their implications for the research (4.10) and my critical appraisal of my research (4.11).

4.1 Research Aim and Questions

The aim of this research is to critically examine interpretations and constructions of cultural diversity and intercultural education in Greek-Cypriot state primary schools after the introduction of the new national curriculum. To achieve this aim, the following research questions have been set:

1. What are Greek-Cypriot primary school teachers' and head teachers' beliefs, understandings and practices in relation to intercultural education and cultural diversity?
2. What do teachers and head teachers perceive as the challenges to, and opportunities for, the implementation of intercultural education in Greek-Cypriot primary schools?
3. How do primary school pupils understand and respond to cultural diversity and possible intercultural education developments within diverse school environments?

To answer these questions and achieve the aim of this study, certain decisions were taken to ensure that the most suitable methodological approach would be followed. These methodological decisions and the underpinning philosophical assumptions are explained in the following sections of this chapter.

4.2 Philosophical Assumptions Informing the Study

Social constructionism has had a major impact on the way this study was shaped. Specifically, knowledge is understood as culturally and historically specific (Burr, 2003). It is collectively generated, maintained and reproduced through social processes (Crotty, 1998). Social reality is construed as the product of these social processes (Burr, 2003) and is thus, seen as being socially constructed (Crotty, 1998). Our constructions of social reality are the result of the way we understand the social world and of our actions based on those understandings (Hammersley, 2007). Our ways of understanding the social world 'are seen as products of [our] culture and history, and are dependent upon the particular social and economic arrangements prevailing in that culture at that time' (Burr, 2003, p. 4). Adopting a critical realist position, it is believed that 'there is a structural reality to the world, usually described in terms of power relations, which in some ways underpins, generates or "affords" our ways of understanding and talking about it' (Burr, 2003,

p. 102). Hence, our constructions of reality are constrained by means of ‘material or social structures, social relations and institutionalized practices’ (Burr, 2003, p. 22). Understanding intercultural education and cultural diversity as social constructs, this research focused on how they are constructed by Greek-Cypriot primary school teachers, head teachers and pupils, exploring their relevant understandings and actions. Particular attention was paid to the institutional contexts and the wider sociocultural, political, economic, and historical context of Cyprus in which these constructions were situated, to gain a deeper understanding of influences on these constructions.

Being informed by Nancy Fraser’s (1997, 2009) theory of social justice, this research moves beyond social constructionism and employs the ‘advocacy / participatory’ paradigm (Creswell, 2007), by advocating for action to enable primary education in Cyprus to move towards a political, transformative version of intercultural education grounded in social justice. As this research focuses on education - a matter that directly affects children – children’s voices could not but be included.

There has been a tendency in childhood research informed by a developmental psychology discourse to portray children as being at a pre-rational and pre-social stage (Prout & James, 1997), as ‘incompetent in making judgments or...as unreliable witnesses about their own lives’ (Qvortrup, 1994, p.2). Consequently, adults spoke on behalf of children. Following the paradigm of the new sociology of childhood, in this study, children are understood as ‘competent social actors’, who shape their own world and need to be researched in their own right (James & Prout, 1997). Unlike childhood research *about* or *on* children, which treat them as *objects* of the research (Gallacher & Gallagher, 2008), drawing on the aforementioned paradigm, this study views children ‘as subjects and active agents experiencing and shaping their own lives’ (Hill, 2006, p. 72) and their perspectives are deemed to be equally significant as those of adult participants in this research. Children are neither understood as a homogeneous group having a single voice, nor as groups of children sharing the same race, religion, class, language or age (Davis, 1998), as both conceptualisations fail to take into account the complexity

of fluid and intersecting identities. Instead, it is believed that there are various children's cultures and that the 'children's voices should be understood within the context of the structures which influence and are influenced by what children do and say' (James & Prout, 1990, as ctd in Davis, 1998, p. 327). Constructed in the context of three state primary Greek-Cypriot schools with different profiles, this study explicitly included the voices of pupils exploring their understandings and experiences of cultural diversity in schools and beyond schools. Their contributions were essential to the development of a comprehensive picture of constructions of cultural diversity and intercultural education in Greek-Cypriot primary schools. The conceptualisation of children in this study carries certain implications for the research methods, the researcher role and ethics, which are considered in the relevant sections of this chapter.

Making explicit its political purpose, that is to contribute insights in the direction of social justice and equity education, this study and its purpose seemed to be best served by critical ethnography, which has been described as 'conventional ethnography with a political purpose' (Thomas, 1993 as qtd in Madison, 2005). Aiming at 'unmasking dominant, social structures and the vested interests they represent, with a goal of transforming society and freeing individuals from the sources of domination and repression', critical ethnography has been very popular in the field of anti-racism research (Jamal, 2005, p. 235).

Critical ethnography 'focuses on both the relationship between social structures and individuals, and on the importance of the accounts of the individuals in interpreting the world' (Jamal, 2005, p. 234). Thus, critical ethnography acknowledges both the research participants' agency through voicing their experiences and interpretations of the world as well as the researcher's agency in uncovering dominant social structures that oppress groups and individuals. Individuals are often unaware of the impact of social systems and structures on their interpretations and constructions of social reality, which lead them often unconsciously or unintentionally to the reproduction of domination, oppression and discrimination as a natural and taken-for-granted state. Viewing the participants' constructions of the situation under study from a different perspective

- that of the researcher – with the help of theoretical and conceptual tools, may cast light on the systems or structures which contribute to the reproduction of injustice.

Some scholars (e.g. Dei, 2005) have underlined the need to involve the participants in all the stages of critical ethnographic research, including the interpretation of the data, for research to avoid colonization of the research setting. Specifically, Dei (2005) suggests that '[a] hegemonic way of knowledge production that accords unquestioned ethnographic and discursive authority to the researcher ...serve[s] to deny local intellectual agency and disempower local subjects' (Dei, 2005, p. 12). However, it is not always feasible to include participants at all stages of the process. For example, in this study, all the teachers had very busy schedules and often had difficulties even in finding time for the interviews. As regards the children, the time I had with them for activities was restricted to a small number of hours, which ranged between three and five teaching periods in total, as most head teachers did not want me to use much of the teachers' teaching time. Furthermore, the research participants may not 'hav[e] a critical gaze on research and its relevance for politics' (Dei, 2005, p. 17), as they may lack the theoretical and conceptual tools for that critical gaze. A realistic way to involve them in the interpretation process to some extent was member checking, which I used to ensure that I did not misunderstand the participants' replies in the interviews and the children's products, e.g. role plays and posters.

Taking a critical interpretative perspective (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), I critically analysed and interpreted the participants' constructions of intercultural education and cultural diversity using the theoretical framework of intercultural education presented in chapter two. This framework has been based on the discussion of key theoretical ideas that are pertinent to a political, transformative version of intercultural education (Gorski, 2006), namely essentialism, othering, recognition, deconstruction and border crossing. Employing this framework has enabled my critical analysis and interpretation of the participants' constructions of cultural diversity and intercultural education, by casting light on power relations and oppressive structures and discourses which contribute to the reproduction of

injustice. Moreover, the factors shaping teacher agency, policy enactment and children's constructions of cultural diversity presented in chapter three were taken into account for a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of constructions of cultural diversity and intercultural education within and across schools. Hence, my interpretation, though grounded in the participants' constructions of reality, was influenced by the aforementioned frameworks and by my positionality (Thomas, 2013), which was outlined in the introductory chapter. As Dei (2005) notes, '[o]ur subjective identities and political locations inform how we produce knowledge and come to interpret and understand the world' (p. 5). As the researcher, I was open to the field but, at the same time, I carried my own personal, social, ethnic, linguistic, religious and cultural background and critical lenses provided by the theoretical ideas that have informed this study and I had a specific political agenda at the back of my mind, which inevitably affected my interactions with the research participants; data analysis; and my interpretations of what I saw and listened to on the field. Hence, this thesis presents one out of multiple possible representations and interpretations of the participants' constructions of cultural diversity and intercultural education in the three participant schools, which has been shaped by all the aforementioned factors.

As explained in this section, social constructionism, critical realism, the 'advocacy / participatory' paradigm, the new sociology of childhood, critical ethnography and critical interpretivism all contributed to shaping this research and led me to the decision to take a qualitative approach.

4.3 Methodology: A Qualitative Framework

4.3.1 Rationale for Taking a Qualitative Approach

As the aim of this research was to gain an in-depth critical understanding of how intercultural education and cultural diversity are constructed in the everyday life in Greek-Cypriot primary schools, an in-depth qualitative approach seemed to best serve the purpose of this study. The rationale behind my decision to take a

qualitative rather than a quantitative or a mixed approach is explained in this section.

Qualitative approaches are recommended in the field of research with children for allowing more space for children to participate in the production of data and being more effective in giving access to their voices than experiments and surveys (James & Prout, 1997). In general, a qualitative approach could facilitate the in-depth exploration of the participants' perspectives, providing them with the space to voice their views and speak in their own terms about issues related to the research topic, rather than restricting them to a set of standardized questions commonly used in quantitative approaches to achieve 'procedural objectivity' (Hammersley, 2013). Moreover, to investigate teachers' - and children's - beliefs about cultural diversity and intercultural education, it was necessary to examine not only their belief statements but also their intentions and actual practices (Rokeach, 1968; Pajares, 1992).

Acknowledging the context-contingent nature of social constructions and aiming at critically analysing the participants' constructions of cultural diversity and intercultural education, exploring the factors relating to the individual participants and the context in which they operate which shape these constructions, I considered it crucial to examine these constructions in the context of the everyday life in three schools with diverse profiles rather than under experimental conditions or relying solely on the participants' accounts. Employing a qualitative approach allowed me to 'study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 3) and to capture 'the complex, contingent and context-sensitive character of social life' (Hammersley, 2013, p. 11). Hence, the qualitative approach enabled me to gain an insight into head teachers', teachers' and pupils' both verbal and non-verbal actions and interactions in their natural context and, thus, into social relations and institutionalized practices in that context. This allowed me to explore the extent to which the power relations prevailing in Greek-Cypriot society were reproduced or challenged and transformed within each institutional context and whether and how the

particularities and nuances of each institutional context – case - under study impacted on the individual participants’ constructions of cultural diversity and intercultural education. This would not have been possible through a quantitative approach, due to its emphasis on measurement, controlling variables, procedural objectivity, statistical analysis and generalisation.

Both a qualitative and a quantitative approach could have been employed to complement each other (Silverman, 2013; Thomas, 2013). Nevertheless, the aim of this study has been to provide a ‘thick description’ (Geertz, 1973) of constructions of cultural diversity and intercultural education in a small number of cases, to cast light on how the interplay between the participants’ profiles and the features of the institutional context shape these constructions, rather than to make generalisations about all primary schools in Cyprus. As interpretation and depth were sought rather than quantification and breadth, a qualitative approach seemed to best fit the purposes of this study and the philosophical assumptions underpinning it.

4.3.2 Critical Ethnographic Case Study

Among various qualitative approaches, critical ethnographic case study seemed to serve the purposes of this study best, as is explained in this section.

The wide use of ethnography in research areas in which the present study is located and its recommended use in the new sociology of childhood have contributed to my decision to use it in the present study. Ethnography has often been used in research on intercultural and multicultural education (e.g. May, 1994; Valdiviezo, 2009, 2010; Beremenyi, 2011; Silva & Langhout, 2011) and on racism (Stevens, 2008; Vaught & Castagno, 2008; Dovemark, 2013) in various parts of the world, including Cyprus (e.g. Zembylas, 2010f; Papamichael, 2011; Theodorou, 2011). This could be attributed to the fact that ethnography allows researchers to immerse themselves into the everyday life of people (Creswell, 2007) and gain an understanding of a situation from within, by means of fieldwork with people rather

than research on people (Thomas, 2013). Thus, ethnography provides insights into the participants' language, actions and interactions, which reflect and shape the ways in which racism operates and the ways in which vague concepts, such as intercultural and multicultural education, are conceptualized and operationalized in specific contexts. Moreover, ethnography allows the researcher to get as close as possible to children's everyday lives (Esser et al., 2016) and it has been described as 'a particularly useful methodology' for research with children in the field of the new sociology of childhood, as it allows children's voices to be heard and involves them in the generation of data (James and Prout, 1997, p. 8).

The definition of ethnography that has been adopted in this study is the one provided by Hammersley and Atkinson (2007), namely that of a research approach, which:

...usually involves the researcher participating overtly or covertly, in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, and/or asking questions through informal and formal interviews, collecting documents and artefacts-in fact, gathering whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the emerging focus of inquiry. (p. 3)

The researcher's immersion in the field for an extended period of time allows them to explore people's perspectives, actions, verbal and non-verbal interactions and thus, their constructions of social reality in situ. By focusing on a few cases, ethnography allows the in-depth study of multiple perspectives (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). For a deeper understanding of the local culture, ethnographers draw on a variety of data sources and employ a range of data collection methods. Taking an 'open-ended approach', they avoid highly structured data collection processes, to remain open to the issues that emerge from the field (ibid.). As this in-depth exploration takes place in 'natural' settings, the researcher can gain an insight into factors within the immediate context that may affect the participants' constructions.

However, the present study differentiates itself from ethnographic research in the spirit of realism or naturalism which tries to examine the social world as separate from the researcher and strives for objectivity, dismissing the ethnographer's

political commitments as irrelevant to the research and as a threat to the objectivity of the research (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Making explicit its political purpose, it takes a critical ethnographic approach, which acknowledges the researcher's involvement in the generation, analysis and critical interpretation of the data. Critical ethnography has been recommended by Santoro and Smyth (2010) as a way 'to conduct respectful, reflective and meaningful research' and reduce the power imbalance in research in multi-ethnic contexts conducted by researchers who belong to the 'hegemonic mainstream' (p. 501). They suggest that critical research gives voice to people who are usually silenced or silent, such as minority ethnic children in my research context, and has, thus, the potential to change their lives by raising awareness of their experiences. At the same time, drawing on Olesen (2003), they propound that the researcher's cultural values and beliefs, which may differ from those of the researched ones, comprise 'a set of different and potentially rich perspectives from which to draw' (p. 501) which, however, need to be made explicit. Consequently, critical ethnography as a methodology is compatible with the philosophical assumptions underpinning this study, namely critical ethnography as epistemology and the critical interpretivist and advocacy paradigms, and the political purpose of this study, which is to contribute to changes towards social justice and equity in the education of minority ethnic pupils

A debate about ethnography concerns the definition of "the spatial and temporal boundaries" of the study (Hammersley, 2006). In other words, this debate is about whether the ethnography should be holistic and situate what is studied in the wider social context or it should focus on a detailed analysis of the micro-context under study. Taking into account the time constraints of my study while being aware of the significance of the wider context to enhance understanding of the participants' constructions of the social world, I decided to use critical ethnographic case studies.

A case study approach has been chosen because it allows both a detailed analysis and a more holistic overview of the phenomena under study and their interplay with the real-life context in which they are situated (Yin, 2009). It 'strive[s] to

catch the close-up reality and “thick description” (Geertz, 1973) of participants’ lived experiences of thoughts about, and feelings for, a situation’ (Cohen et al., 2000, p.182), and at the same time, to ‘identify the various interactive processes at work’ (Bell, 1999, p.11). Hence, providing rich and in-depth data, a case study approach could allow me to gain an insight into the participants’ perspectives and practices in relation to cultural diversity and intercultural education and their interactions within the bounded unit of the school (Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013). It could, thus, allow a comprehensive understanding of the interaction between the participants’ constructions of cultural diversity and intercultural education and the institutional and the national context in which they were embedded.

As the aim of this research was to critically examine interpretations and constructions of cultural diversity and intercultural education in Greek-Cypriot state primary schools, each case (school) study would be ‘instrumental’ to accomplishing this specific goal rather than ‘intrinsic’, which, as Stake (1995) explains, attempts to fully capture each case to fully understand the specific case. Specifically, instrumental case studies of three state Greek-Cypriot primary schools were created, focusing on three classes in each school as settings to explore constructions of cultural diversity and intercultural education within the school. Using multiple instrumental cases studied in parallel enabled me to gain a deeper understanding not only of how intercultural education is constructed within each school, but also how the wider sociocultural, political and historical context in which these schools are located influences these constructions. As Crossley and Vulliamy (1984) highlight, it is significant to recognize the historical and socio-political context of educational innovation, while failure to do so may lead to ‘a naive “blame the teacher” view of implementation failures’ (p. 204).

This study strove to create a comprehensive and detailed picture of constructions of cultural diversity and intercultural education in the case study schools, by using multiple methods of data collection, namely observations, interviews, activities with the pupils and the collection of documents; and multiple sources, namely teachers, pupils and head teachers. This allowed the triangulation of data and, thus,

helped to ensure the validity of the conclusions drawn (Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013).

Although the methodology described in this section seemed to best suit the aims of this research, critiques against it cannot be ignored. The major critiques of the chosen methodology and the way I responded to them are discussed in the following section.

4.3.3 Major Critiques of the Methodology Used and My Response

Critical ethnography has often been criticized for bias (Jamal, 2005; Hammersley, 2006) and for producing findings which have been distorted by the researcher's political convictions (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). It can be argued, however, that no researcher can be detached from their values and political convictions, as they are part of each individual's identity, and that politics permeates all research, as it serves certain purposes and interests rather than others. The advantage of critical ethnography is that it makes the researcher's political stance and values explicit and, thus, the audience / readers can critically review the findings and the analysis from an informed position (Denscombe, 2002). As Griffiths (1998) notes:

...bias comes not from having ethical and political positions - this is inevitable - but from not acknowledging them. Not only does such acknowledgment help to unmask any bias that is implicit in those views, but it helps to provide a way of responding critically and sensitively to the research (p. 133).

Case study research has been subject to a similar critique regarding the objectivity of the research and the truthfulness of the claims made (Pring, 2000). The present study does not claim that the data generated or the research findings portray an objective reality or that there is only one truth that the research purports to have revealed. On the contrary, in line with the social constructionist paradigm underpinning the study, the data and the findings of the research are the result of the interaction between the researcher's and the participants' subjective interpretations of the social world, which have been influenced by their personal

histories and the wider sociocultural, political, historical and institutional context in which they are situated. Several scholars (e.g. Santoro & Smyth, 2010; Hammersley, 2013; Thomas, 2013) have underlined the potential benefits, such as increased understanding, arising from this interaction between the researcher's perspective and the perspectives of the research participants.

I acknowledge that my personal history, my socio-historical and political location, the theoretical and conceptual tools I have used, and my participation in the social world I have studied have had an impact on my research. Therefore, I have taken a reflexive stance towards my work, as recommended by many scholars (Pink, 2006; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Santoro & Smyth, 2010; Hammersley, 2013; Spyrou, 2016). In the introductory chapter, I explicated my positionality, so that who I am, where I stand and my motives for undertaking this research were made explicit to the reader. In the previous two chapters, I explicated the theoretical ideas that have informed this study. In this chapter, I have provided a detailed outline of the research process, explaining the decisions taken throughout the research and the rationale behind them, to elucidate the procedures I used to collect and analyse my data. To increase the trustworthiness, validity and reliability of my research, I have also taken several measures, which I have explained in detail in the relevant section (4.8). Moreover, I have tried to keep a reflexive stance, while reporting my findings, considering the impact that my presence and the methods used may have had on the participants' words, actions and interactions.

Another debate regarding both case study research (see Pring, 2000, Thomas, 2013) and ethnography (see Calderhead, 1996) refers to the generalizability of findings that result from in-depth study of a single or a few cases. Pring (2000) describes this critique as the 'uniqueness fallacy'. As Denscombe (1998) explains, '[a]lthough each case is in some respects unique, it is also a single example of a broader class of things' (p. 36). The aim of this research has not been to produce generalizations. However, being provided with sufficient information about the wider context of my study and the schools, readers can 'make an informed

judgment about how far the findings have relevance to other instances' (Denscombe, 1998, p. 37).

From the next section onwards, this chapter focuses on the way the methodological framework and the assumptions underpinning this study shaped the data collection process, starting with a presentation of my approach to sampling and gaining access to the sample.

4.4 Sampling & Gaining Access

4.4.1 The Process of Sampling

4.4.1.1 Schools

The three case study schools constitute a purposive sample selected for their diverse profiles, for being information-rich cases and for being representative of the three main types of state primary schools in Cyprus. These three schools are:

- a. a mainstream school (St Lazarus) in a low to middle SES area. According to data provided by the MoEC in November 2013, 'other-language-speaking' pupils constituted 42,2 % of its pupil population. However, the interview with the head teacher revealed that the mother of 66% of the pupils was not Greek-Cypriot. The head teacher stressed that this significant fact tended to be overlooked in statistics which considered children who had at least one Greek-Cypriot parent Greek-Cypriots. The main countries of origin of the non-Greek-Cypriot pupils were Georgia, Bulgaria and Romania, but there were also some Syrian, Chinese and Turkish-Cypriot Roma pupils.
- b. a ZEP (Zone of Educational Priority) school in a low SES area. According to the MoEC, 'other-language-speaking' pupils comprised 81,8% of its pupil population. Speaking with the head teacher, I discovered that 96% of

the pupils had at least one non-Greek-Cypriot parent. The countries of origin of the non-Greek-Cypriot pupils were mainly Eastern European countries, such as Bulgaria, Romania, Russia and Georgia, and a small percentage of children were from African and Asian countries, which were not specified by the head teacher.

- c. a mainstream school in a middle to high SES area (Aphrodite). The pupil population in this school was described as Greek-Cypriot by the head teacher and some of the teachers, although a considerable number of children were from mixed marriages. The countries of origin of the non-Greek-Cypriot parents included Australia, Latin America, England, Finland, Lebanon, Greece, Albania, Russia, the Philippines and Hungary.

As regards religion, most pupils were Orthodox Christian, but some pupils in all three schools had different religious backgrounds, such as Muslims or Maronites.

All the schools are in Nicosia, the capital and the city with the highest percentage of non-Cypriot citizens in Cyprus, according to the latest census data (Statistical Service of Cyprus, 2011). It is also a city divided in two parts: i. the northern part, which is illegally occupied by the Turks, and ii. the southern part, where the three schools are located and which is mainly inhabited by Greek-Cypriots. Symbols of the illegal occupation, such as guardhouses, the Turkish flag and the flag of the illegal state of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, are everyday sights for the inhabitants of Nicosia and are even visible from the school yards of two out of the three schools. Hence, Nicosia provided a particularly interesting context for the purposes of this study, as multiculturalism and the ongoing ethnic conflict are part of people's everyday life in this city.

Using 'maximum variation sampling' (Creswell, 2007), I included schools with different compositions of pupil populations in terms of ethnic, linguistic and socioeconomic background to explore whether this variation affected how intercultural education and cultural diversity were constructed across the three schools. Besides a mainstream school with ethnically mixed pupil population in a low to middle SES area (St Lazarus), a ZEP school was included in the sample to

explore whether and how constructions of intercultural education and cultural diversity may be influenced by the ZEP programme, which is part of Cyprus' intercultural education policy (see 1.5 for more details). Additionally, a school with mainly Greek-Cypriot population in a middle to high SES area (Aphrodite) was included in the sample, as such schools have been overlooked in research on intercultural education in Cyprus so far. Furthermore, the specific three schools were chosen because they had been recommended to me by school inspectors as schools where there was some engagement with intercultural education. So, it was interesting to investigate the ways in which the different features of these institutional contexts shaped this engagement.

4.4.1.2 Classes

Within each school, three classes were focused upon as settings to explore constructions of cultural diversity and intercultural education in the school. My initial intention was to include a 1st (6-year-olds), a 3rd (8-year-olds) and a 6th grade (11-year-olds) to examine whether the pupils' age and the different extent to which the new curriculum had been introduced in each grade affected teachers' approaches to intercultural education. Specifically, at the time of my study, while the new curriculum had been fully introduced up to the third grade, it had been partly introduced to higher grades. Finally, however, the research took place in the classes of teachers who consented to participate in the study. The next section provides an overview of the research participants.

4.4.1.3 Participants

To explore constructions of intercultural education in the three schools, it was deemed necessary to explore the teachers' and head teachers' beliefs, understandings and practices in relation to both cultural diversity and intercultural education, as beliefs about intercultural education and cultural diversity are

interrelated (Leeman & Ledoux, 2005). Besides teachers who are in a key position to promote social justice, inclusion and equity in education (Rouse, 2008; Mitchell, 2012), head teachers have also been included in the study, because head teachers play a decisive role in shaping the power relations in the school, the school vision and ethos, teacher agency and policy enactment, as explained in chapter three. In Cyprus, head teachers and school inspectors are usually the main decision makers in schools (Hajisoteriou, 2012) and thus, they influence the ways in which cultural diversity and intercultural education are constructed at the school level. Therefore, the head teacher and three class teachers in each school participated in the study.

Besides the class teachers, in the schools with ‘other-language-speaking’ pupils, GAL (Greek as an additional language) teachers - two in the ZEP school and one in St Lazarus school - also participated in the study, because GAL teaching is one of the main axes of the intercultural education policy in Cyprus (see 1.5). For my deeper understanding of constructions of intercultural education in each school, I also had informal conversations with other teachers who could provide me with information related to my research focus. For example, in Aphrodite school, I had informal conversations with the two teachers teaching Health Education, to explore their views and experiences regarding intercultural education, as this subject had been identified as providing opportunities for the promotion of intercultural education by teachers in the other two schools.

Furthermore, as the topic of my study concerns children, the pupils of the participant teachers also took part in this research. As Ainscow, Booth, and Dyson (1999) argue, ‘without listening to the often hidden voices of students, it is impossible to understand fully the policies and practices of individual schools’ (ctd in Hajisoteriou & Angelides, 2015, p. 112-113). Therefore, children’s understandings, experiences and attitudes in relation to cultural diversity and their responses to potential intercultural education developments in the three schools were explored. The children’s inclusion in this study contributed to my deeper understanding of social relations and structures in each school and enabled me to explore the interplay between different discourses and practices in relation to

cultural diversity across schools and classes and the pupils' constructions of cultural diversity.

More detailed information about the research participants in each school is provided in the three findings chapters. In the following section, the process followed to gain access to the research sites is described.

4.4.2 Access

Following the official process to gain access to schools in Cyprus, I submitted an application form with a full description of my research to the Centre of Educational Research and Evaluation and at the beginning of March 2014, I received MoEC's permission to conduct my research.

To ensure that I would have at least three weeks in each school for my fieldwork, I had already contacted the three head teachers, who were the initial 'gatekeepers' (Thorne, 1980) to my research sites, during my visit to Cyprus in November 2013 for a conference. After informing them about my study, they gave me their verbal consent to include their schools in my research.

At the beginning of March 2014, I visited all three schools to inform the teachers of the grades I was interested in and the GAL teachers about my research. The teachers and the head teachers were provided with a participant information leaflet and a consent form (see Appendices A & B). As explained in 4.4.1.3, in some of the schools, I had to contact teachers of other grades, too, as some teachers I initially contacted did not consent to participating in the research. After I obtained the teachers' consent, I sought their pupils' and their parents' informed consent for the children's participation in the research (see 4.12 for a detailed discussion of the process followed).

As soon as I gained permission from all the aforementioned 'gatekeepers', I was ready to start the data collection. Multiple research methods were used to enable the production of a rich and trustworthy account of constructions of intercultural

education and cultural diversity in the three case study schools. These methods are the focus of the next section.

4.5 Research Methods

The research methods that were used are:

- i. **Individual semi-structured interviews** with the teachers of the nine classes, the three head teachers and the GAL teachers
- ii. **Observations:** Non-participant observations of lessons and the school, and semi – participant observations of pupils’ play during breaks
- iii. **Participatory methods** with the pupils
- iv. **Documents**

These methods are thoroughly discussed below.

4.5.1 Interviews

For the in-depth exploration of the perspectives of the staff members, I employed ‘qualitative interviewing’ (Mason, 2002). In other words, I conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews, which constitute one of the main research methods in this study, as is common in ethnographic research (Fetterman, 1989; Agar, 1996). This type of interviews was chosen for the reasons presented below.

Qualitative interviews have been described as ‘the best means of eliciting accounts of people’s experience and perspectives’ (Mason, 2002; Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013; Hammersley, 2013, p. 54). Being informal and having a flexible structure (Mason, 2002), they can give the interviewees the freedom to speak in their own terms and expand on issues they consider significant (Mason, 2002; Hammersley, 2013). Moreover, semi-structured interviews allow for the same issues to be explored with the various interviewees, using an ‘interview schedule’,

namely a list of issues to be explored and some possible prompts and probes to be used flexibly throughout the interview (Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013; Thomas, 2013). Thus, semi-structured interviews allow for the participants' perspectives to be compared. Furthermore, interviews give the researcher the opportunity to solicit further information or request clarification and interpretation of the observations from the interviewees. They can, thus, help the researcher explain and contextualise what they observe in the field (Fetterman, 1989).

For this study, I conducted a total of 27 qualitative interviews with nine class teachers, three head teachers and three GAL teachers. Two interviews were conducted with each of the nine teachers and the three head teachers - one towards the beginning of my fieldwork and one towards the end. I also conducted interviews with four Ministry officials to gain a deeper understanding of the intercultural education policy in Cyprus. However, due to time and space limitations, the data generated from these interviews have not been used in this thesis. The first interviews with the class teachers and the head teachers focused mainly on their understandings, views and practices as regards intercultural education and cultural diversity; the school approach to intercultural education and cultural diversity; the perceived challenges to, and opportunities for, the implementation of intercultural education; and their views regarding the pupils' responses to diversity. The interviews with the GAL teachers explored similar topics but were more focused on the teachers' views and experiences regarding the teaching of Greek to 'other-language-speaking' pupils. All interviews started with straightforward factual questions and gradually progressed to open-ended and more in-depth questions. The flexible use of schedules for the interviews with the head teachers, class teachers and GAL teachers (see Appendices G-I for the schedules) allowed me to compare head teachers' and teachers' views across and within schools and thus, understand the extent to which the institutional and the wider national context impacted on constructions of cultural diversity and intercultural education in the case study schools. The interview schedules for the 1st interviews with the teachers and the head teachers had been piloted with two Greek-Cypriot teachers and two head teachers, respectively. These pilot interviews helped me check the clarity and appropriateness of the questions and

refine them prior to the interviews with the research participants. The 2nd interviews with the head teachers and the class teachers functioned as follow-up interviews, through which clarification, more depth or additional information was sought. In the case of the head teachers, the 2nd interview had not been originally planned, but the need for it emerged during my fieldwork, as questions arose from my observations as well as from the interviews with the head teachers in the other schools.

All the interviews were face-to-face and were conducted at a place within the school premises and time determined by the interviewees. The duration of the interviews varied, ranging from 60 to 120 minutes depending on how talkative the interviewee was. As the interviews took place during the teachers' free 40-minute teaching period, they took place in parts.

Being aware of the limitations of interviews, such as the power imbalance between the interviewer and the interviewee (Kvale, 2006) and 'reactivity' (Hammersley, 2013), namely the impact of the interviewer on the interviewee's responses, I took several measures to minimize these limitations prior to, as well as during, the interviews. For instance, I tried to establish rapport and create a non-threatening and warm atmosphere from my very first contact with the participants. By keeping the stance of not knowing (Madison, 2005; Nunkoosing, 2005) and expressing my genuine interest in the interviewees' perspectives and experiences throughout the fieldwork, I acknowledged their power of knowledge. This interest was exhibited throughout the interviews through my careful listening to the interviewees signaled by means of neutral responses, like "Uh huh", "Thank you" and "Okay", and my probes and follow-up questions. There were some instances when some teachers did not feel comfortable because of their lack of knowledge regarding intercultural education policies. However, I reassured them that there was no right or wrong reply and I expressed my sincere interest in their personal understanding of the concept of intercultural education. Furthermore, asking for the participants' informed consent for their participation in the interview and for the recording of the interview and reminding them of their right to refuse to answer questions and

to withdraw at any stage prior to the interview acknowledged and respected their share of control over the research process.

Acknowledging the potential impact of the researcher's status, ethnicity, culture and gender on the interviewees' replies (Madison, 2005; Nunkoosing, 2005), I tried to emphasize the characteristics I shared with the participants, namely my being Greek-Cypriot and an English teacher. Thus, I tried to avoid being seen as an outsider who could possibly not empathize with these teachers' and head teachers' experiences. Judging from the rich data generated, I think I managed to create an environment that was conducive to the interviewees openly sharing their opinions and experiences.

However, the power imbalance was not eliminated. As the researcher, I was the one who decided on the topic of the interviews, posed questions that facilitated the elicitation of relevant information, and analysed and interpreted the data generated through the interviews (Kvale, 2006). Nevertheless, I tried to moderate the unequal distribution of power through the aforementioned strategies and through member-checking, by summarizing the interviewees' main points and checking the accuracy of my understanding with them, so as to avoid misrepresentation of their perspectives.

Although the interviews helped me explore the teachers' and head teachers' understandings, beliefs and experiences in relation to cultural diversity and intercultural education, I supplemented and crosschecked their accounts by means of observations. The observations enabled me to gain a contextualized, deeper and more comprehensive understanding of constructions of cultural diversity and intercultural education in the three schools.

4.5.2 Observations

Combining interviews with observations is common in ethnographic research (Creswell, 2007; Gomm, 2008). Observations allow the researcher to move

beyond the interviewees' accounts and perspectives and gain a holistic and in-depth view of the setting in which people interact (Patton, 2002; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Taking an open-ended, inductive approach, the researcher may discover routines and practices that are so deeply ingrained in the system or the culture they examine that interviewees may fail to mention them in the interviews, as they take them for granted and may not be conscious of them (Patton, 2002). Observations can also provide an insight into issues that the interviewees might be unwilling or uncomfortable to talk about (Patton, 2002; Cohen, et al., 2007), like racism. Hence, by supplementing interviews with observations in natural settings, the researcher may gain a better and deeper understanding of what the interviewees believe and why and of how they act (Hammersley, 2013) and interact with other people in this setting. For these reasons, I observed lessons, pupils' play, the school setting and school celebrations. Taking an ecological approach to teachers' and children's agency (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Priestley et al., 2015) required examining practices and verbal and non-verbal interactions in context. The observations of and in three different institutional contexts enabled my in-depth understanding and critical examination of constructions of cultural diversity and intercultural education in each school and of the ways in which features of the institutional context may influence these constructions.

As regards lesson observations, I observed twelve teaching periods per teacher and thus, a total of 36 teaching periods per school. I observed lessons on various subjects, as intercultural education needs to permeate the whole curriculum and not be restricted to one or two subjects. Moreover, I observed six teaching periods of Greek language support sessions for 'other-language-speaking' pupils in St Lazarus school and twelve in the ZEP school, where I observed two teachers' lessons. During all lesson observations, I took detailed field notes of the teacher's practices and the teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil verbal and non-verbal interactions which could help me understand how cultural diversity and intercultural education were constructed in the classroom context. I also drew diagrams of the classroom layout and the seating arrangements and I copied anything the teacher or the pupils wrote on the classroom board that could be related to my research topic. I also included descriptions of the setting, namely of the decoration of the classroom and

the resources available. Furthermore, I photocopied any teaching material used either from the text books or prepared by the teacher that was relevant to my research focus. Thus, lesson observations helped me gain an insight into the classroom ethos, and, thus, into the values, principles and beliefs in relation to cultural diversity promoted through the teachers' teaching content and practices, the classroom decoration and interactions. Observing lessons in different classes and different institutional contexts also allowed the exploration of how the interplay between the institutional context and teachers' beliefs and understandings regarding cultural diversity and intercultural education shaped constructions of cultural diversity and intercultural education in each class and school.

As regards the observations of pupils' play during breaks, I focused on one of the three participant classes in each school each week. Hence, for a week I followed the pupils of the class focused upon in the school yard during all breaks. Depending on the number of pupils in each class and the size of the school yard, sometimes it was impossible to follow all the pupils, as they split into groups and scattered as soon as the bell rang. When a big number of pupils from a class were observed, I observed some groups during some breaks and others during other breaks. Due to these challenges, I cannot claim that I had a complete picture of how all the pupils who participated in the research acted and interacted during breaks. Nevertheless, it was illuminating to observe friendship groups and marginalized pupils; unexpected critical incidents, such as quarrels; the different activities the pupils engaged in; their verbal and non-verbal interactions during breaks, which were a lot more spontaneous than during the lesson; and the resources made available to them by the school. During break observations, I took detailed field notes either on the spot or if it was not possible, I did so immediately after the game or the conversation ended.

During my fieldwork, I also observed and recorded everything that reflected the school's approach to cultural diversity and intercultural education. I took photos of the school facilities and the classrooms of the participating grades, paying particular attention to the decoration and to the existence or absence of any

national, international or religious symbols in the school setting. I also observed and took notes of school assemblies and celebrations and of extra-curricular activities either during these events or, if not possible, as soon as I got home.

Taking into account my restricted time in each school and my intention to compare constructions of cultural diversity and intercultural education across the participating classes within each school and across schools, I had designed separate observation schedules for lesson, break and school observations (see Appendix J). The schedules were used as guidelines for things to look for across settings, while, in my fieldnotes, I took a less structured approach. I tried to capture as much as possible of what was happening in the class and during breaks in my notes. In this way, reading my detailed notes afterwards enabled me to bring the scenes back to memory and analyse them focusing on various aspects. Of course, it was not possible to observe and take a note of everything. So, my observations and field notes were directed by my research topic and research questions (Layder, 2013).

In the field, I had the observation schedules as guidelines and my field notebook – one for each school - where I kept my field notes. At home, I kept a reflexive diary, where I recorded my reflections on the observations. These reflections enabled me to reconsider my approach and make any necessary adjustments, such as changing my role from that of the non-participant observer to that of the semi-participant observer during break observations (see 4.10 about this shift of my role). In my diary, I also attempted an initial analysis of what I had observed and I took notes of the theoretical ideas emerging from my fieldwork and the issues requiring further exploration or the questions I needed to ask the pupils or the teachers to help me better understand what I had observed.

The next section presents the participatory methods I used to supplement my observations of children's actions, activities and verbal and non-verbal interactions. Using whole-class activities enabled me to capture more pupils' perspectives and thus, minimize the risk of potential bias caused by my selective focus on specific groups of children during break observations. In addition, the

activities allowed the production of data by the children themselves rather than mediated by me as the observer and note-taker and thus, they allowed me “to grasp the native’s point of view” (Malinowski, 1922 as qtd in Sanjek, 1990, p. 212) to the extent possible.

4.5.3 Participatory Methods

Some scholars (e.g Christensen, 2004) suggest that children need not be treated as different from adults in research but as ‘fellow human beings’ (Christensen, 2004, p. 165). Other scholars (e.g. Thomas & O’Kane, 1998) suggest that there are significant differences between research with children and research with adults and recommend the use of ‘participatory’ research techniques with children to actively involve them in the research process. Participatory techniques represent a wide variety of methods, which actively involve participants in the production of data (Gallagher, 2008). Such methods can be drawing, child-led photography, role play, spider diagrams and story writing.

On the one hand, Thomas and O’Kane (1998) suggest that participatory techniques reduce the power imbalance between the adult researcher and the children, ‘giv[ing] children control over the research process and ... are in tune with children’s ways of seeing and relating to their world’ (p. 337). On the other hand, Gallagher (2008) questions the underlying understanding of power as a commodity that can be given by the dominant group (adults) to their subordinates (children) and warns against a naïve use of participatory techniques, which may lead to ‘reinforc[ing] rather than challeng[ing] hierarchical power relations’ (p. 137). This could be the case if, for example, predefined activities are imposed on children, participation is required, or specific forms of participation are demanded (Gallacher & Gallagher, 2008). Instead, Gallacher and Gallagher (2008) suggest adopting an attitude of ‘methodological immaturity’, namely to approach the children’s world from a position of ignorance and to adopt an open-ended approach. Similarly, Christensen (2004) suggests attending to the children’s

‘cultures of communication’, instead of entering the field with predetermined methods.

In this study, research with children is understood as being different from research with adults due to ‘the disparities in power and status between adults and children’ (Morrow & Richards, 1996, p. 98), which are augmented in the context of the school, where the children are expected to obey adults. Specific measures were taken to reduce the power imbalance (see 4.11). As regards the research methods, I had decided to supplement the observations of children during lessons and breaks with whole-class activities with the children, which would allow me to collect data produced by the pupils themselves and not to rely solely on my field notes from the observations. Taking the stance of ‘methodological immaturity’, the activities were determined while in the field after observing pupils’ play and consulting both the pupils about their preferences in terms of activities and their teachers about the appropriateness of the activities eventually designed. Thus, I could ensure that the participatory methods used would cater for the pupils’ interests and they would be appropriate for the specific pupils. To cater for all pupils’ interests and competencies, I used a variety of techniques, which encouraged the use of various modes of communication, such as speaking, writing and body language.

The activities took place in two rounds. The first round, which aimed at exploring the children’s understandings of cultural diversity, took place during my second week in each school, while the second round, which aimed at exploring their responses to cultural diversity, took place during my third week in the field. By that time, rapport had been established and the children felt comfortable with my being around. In fact, they were looking forward to the activities and they often asked me during breaks when we would do the activities. I think that because I had involved them in suggesting activities from my first week in the field, when I asked them to write their suggestions on their consent forms, and because these activities would be different from their daily routine, most children were positively predisposed towards, and some even looked forward to, the activities. This was also manifested by the very high rate of participation in the activities. All the

activities were conducted in the classrooms and the two rounds lasted between two and four teaching periods in total in each class, depending on the class size.

The activities were largely the same for all grades, to enable the comparison of findings across grades and schools. Minor adjustments were made to ensure that they were appropriate for the pupils in each grade. For example, taking into account most younger pupils' lack of familiarity with the term, and possibly the concept of, 'cultural diversity', I avoided using this term with the younger pupils but I elicited their understandings of differences among people through a discussion we had after a game described below. But, in the 5th and 6th grades, I asked the pupils to record their understandings of cultural diversity on an A1-size poster (see Appendix L for examples). I also showed a different video to the 1st grade pupils than to the rest of the pupils. Specifically, the following activities were used:

1st Round of Activities

Aim: To explore pupils' understandings of cultural diversity

1. Game followed by a discussion
2. Only for the 5th and 6th grades: Creating a poster followed by a discussion
3. Photo elicitation (Harper, 2002)

2nd Round of Activities

Aim: To explore pupils' attitudes towards cultural diversity

4. Sentence completion task
5. Role play followed by a discussion
6. Video followed by a discussion

All the activities were digitally recorded and all documents, namely the posters and the handouts, were collected. The analysis of the data generated through the activities took into consideration the pupils' interpretations of their artefacts or role plays, which were sought during or after the activities. For instance, pupils' clarifications on any replies on the handouts that were not clear were sought after the activities, during breaktime. Detailed information about each of the aforementioned activities can be found in Appendix K.

4.5.3.1 Critical Appraisal of the Participatory Methods

Although the participatory activities facilitated the generation of data from a greater number of children, compared to observations, it cannot be assumed that all participating pupils' perspectives were fully captured, as they did not all participate in the discussions. Moreover, in group activities, such as the role play and the poster activities, the possibility of 'false consensus' or 'group think' (Fielding et al., 2000, p.10) has to be considered. Therefore, I decided to include the sentence completion task, to gain an insight into all pupils' friendship groups and experiences at school.

Furthermore, it cannot be claimed that the participatory techniques per se automatically minimized the power imbalance between the children and me. Instead, power was negotiated. Even though I was influenced by the children's recommendations, I was the one who designed the activities, gave the pupils instructions of what to do in each activity, and guided our discussions through my open-ended questions. However, there was scope for the pupils to exercise their agency. For example, their participation in the activities was voluntary and some of the pupils refused to participate in some activities. Moreover, although I chose the topics of our discussion, making sure that they were relevant to my research topic, my open-ended questions aimed at encouraging children to express their own views, experiences and attitudes in their own terms. The only time I intervened was when I felt that a child's safety-emotional or physical-could be at risk.

Taking into consideration the power imbalance, throughout the activities, some children may have given replies that they thought would please me or they may have feared the consequences of a 'non-desirable' reply, as they might not have been used to expressing their opinions freely to adults or to their views being seriously considered by adults (Punch, 2002). To minimize this and increase the chances of receiving truthful replies, I tried to establish trust, rapport and mutual respect before conducting the activities. During the activities, I tried to create a friendly and relaxed atmosphere, by including games and creative activities. However, the teacher's - and in one case the head teacher's - presence in class during the activities may have reinforced some of the pupils' perception of the activities' session as a lesson and their impression that they had to give the 'right' answer.

Additionally, some pupils' responses to the photo elicitation activity and to the role plays may have been influenced by the appearance of the children depicted on the photos and the information I gave them about their origin, religious and socioeconomic background (see Appendix M for the photos and children's profiles). The specific photos had been chosen to explore children's understandings of, and responses to, migrant and refugee children. However, it is not certain whether the children's responses reflected their personal views and attitudes in relation to these groups. Nevertheless, they reflected the children's beliefs about the experiences and common treatment of members of these groups in Greek-Cypriot schools.

Despite their limitations, the participatory methods used provided a fun and creative way for most children to engage with issues related to cultural diversity and provided them with the space for their voices to be heard. Therefore, the participatory methods constitute the main method used to explore children's constructions of cultural diversity. They are complemented by the break and lesson observations and the interviews with the teachers and the head teachers, in which they expressed their views regarding the pupils' responses to cultural diversity. The teachers' and head teachers' perceptions of the pupils' attitudes towards cultural diversity in the school were explored to check how well the teachers and

head teachers knew and understood their pupils rather than the truthfulness of the children's replies in the activities.

4.5.4 Documents

Greek-Cypriot policy documents regarding intercultural education and, wherever available, school policy documents were collected and analysed to explore how cultural diversity and intercultural education were constructed in the policy discourse and how the policies were interpreted and enacted by head teachers and teachers in schools. National education policy documents were accessed on the Internet, but the head teachers also gave me copies of relevant policy documents that had been issued during the school year 2013-2014.

In the schools, besides school policy documents, I collected any documents that related to the topic of my research. For example, in the ZEP school I collected leaflets with information about the ZEP programme and photocopied relevant posters issued by the Ministry. In all schools, I took photos of the school facilities, displays around the school and the classrooms in which the research took place. These reflected the school ethos and enabled me to provide a nuanced account of the contexts of my research. I also photocopied relevant texts and handouts that were used during the lesson observations, which helped me remember what the lesson was about and accompanied my fieldnotes. Finally, I collected the pupils' posters and the handouts used for the sentence completion activity.

Having discussed the research methods used in this study, the next section delineates the data collection process.

4.6 Fieldwork

My fieldwork started in March 2014 and lasted until the end of the school year, namely June 2014. I spent three weeks in each school for the main part of my data

collection except for one school where I spent four weeks, as explained below. Besides the ordinary school hours (7:45am-1:05pm), when most of my fieldwork took place, I also attended school feasts for national holidays, such as the 25th of March and the 1st of April, as well as the end-of-year celebrations in the three schools. In the ZEP school, I also attended the optional afternoon (‘ολοήμερο’) and evening classes one day during the third week of my fieldwork, to experience a whole day in this school (7:45am-7pm) and get an overview of what these extra classes involve. Although I wanted to spend a whole day in St Lazarus school, where there were optional afternoon classes (‘ολοήμερο’) as well, I was not given permission to do so.

To ensure that the three weeks in each school would not be consecutive but repeated in a cyclical manner - one week at school A, the second in school B, the third one in school C, the fourth in school A etc.- I had prepared three timetables- one for each school- and each head teacher chose the one that suited the school’s plan of activities best. Some adjustments to the originally suggested timetables were made at the head teacher’s or the teachers’ request, but still the three weeks at each school were not consecutive. For example, an extra week was added to my fieldwork in Aphrodite school, as the 6th grade teacher asked me to conduct the activities and the third week’s lesson observations after the school’s end-of-year celebration, because the pupils had intensive rehearsals during my third week in this school. The cyclical pattern was used because the fieldwork in each school could provide insights into different issues that could suggest topics requiring further exploration in the other schools. Thus, the data collection in context A informed the data collection in contexts B and C and vice versa. In this way, I ensured that similar issues were paid attention to across contexts.

The field work at each site took place in stages. For each of the three weeks, I had created a detailed plan, to ensure consistency across sites and the even distribution of interviews, observations and activities with the children across the three weeks in each school (see Appendix O for the plan).

The next section outlines my approach to the analysis of the data generated and collected for the purposes of this study.

4.7 Data Analysis

My fieldwork generated a very large amount of data from the various methods and sources used, which necessitated effective organization and management, to facilitate retrieval and analysis. From the very start of the research, I created four electronic files: one for each school and one for the Ministry of Education and Culture. In each file, I saved all data related to each site in a digital format. Besides the electronic files, I also used four big folders, where I stored all data in printed form or in handwriting. Within each electronic file or folder for each school, the data were classified according to grades. My research diary and the posters created by the pupils were kept separately, but I made sure that all data were kept in places which I was the only one who had access to.

As suggested by a number of scholars (Patton, 2002; Cohen et al., 2007; Layder, 2013; Thomas, 2013), a preliminary form of data analysis started while I was still in the field. In my reflexive diary, I recorded my reflections on the data collected and I recorded relevant issues that seemed to emerge in each setting, so that I could explore them further within that setting as well as in the other two schools, looking for evidence that confirmed or challenged my initial interpretations. In this way, interviews, observations and the activities with the pupils informed each other and the ones that followed. For example, the opportunities for addressing diversity issues through the new subject of Health Education were highlighted through the first interviews with some of the teachers. This made me explore other teachers' views about this new subject in the same school and in the other two schools and request to observe a Health Education lesson on a diversity-related topic, wherever possible. In Aphrodite school, I also had informal conversations with the teachers teaching this subject in that school, to explore their views and understandings of intercultural education.

A more structured approach was used for the initial analysis of the data gathered from the first interviews with the teachers. This analysis took place before the second interviews with them, to check whether there were issues I needed to explore, clarify or follow up with some of the teachers. As my time was limited, I developed a form using ‘structural codes’, namely labels based on my research questions and my initial literature review, which enabled me to organize and gain an overview of the data already gathered (Saldaña, 2009). As I listened to each interview, I transcribed all the relevant segments next to the most appropriate code. As some parts of the interviews were relevant, but did not fit under the already specified codes, I added new codes to the form. Completing this form for the first interview enabled me to gather the missing or more detailed data through the second interviews. Before the description of the process of analysis that took place after the completion of my fieldwork, the analytical decisions taken during the process of transcribing and translating are presented below.

Transcribing could be described as an act of translating verbal accounts into printed words (Tedlock, 1983 as cited in Jackson, 1988). All interviews, including the first interviews with the teachers, which had initially been partly transcribed, were fully transcribed after the end of my fieldwork, to retain the richness of the original accounts and, thus, allow for a more nuanced and robust analysis. Therefore, all interviews were transcribed in the dialect used by the interviewees, although the Cypriot dialect is usually replaced by Modern Greek in writing. Moreover, speech errors, long pauses and emphasis have been included in the transcripts. As regards the recorded activities with the pupils, I transcribed only the parts that indicated the children’s understandings, experiences, and attitudes in relation to cultural diversity, because not all the material was relevant to the research focus and transcribing was time-consuming.

Another level of translation was needed to enable me to include excerpts from my transcripts and my field notes in my thesis. I decided not to translate word by word, as this might, in some cases, lead to nonsensical sentences in English. Therefore, I stayed as close to the original as possible, making sure that the intended meaning

was conveyed in English. The fact that I am Greek-Cypriot and an English teacher facilitated this process.

The data analysis followed the pattern of the data organization described above, both of which were influenced by my use of the case study approach. The three data sets that were analysed were the data generated at each of the three case study schools. The fourth data set that includes all the information gathered regarding the constructions of intercultural education at the level of the MoEC served to provide the context in which the three case study schools are situated. Acknowledging the importance of the analysis process for the rigour of the research and believing that “the analyst’s first and foremost responsibility consists of doing justice to each individual case” (Patton, 2002, p. 449), meticulous attention has been paid to this stage of the research, for which Miles and Huberman’s (1994) framework has been used. Hence, data analysis proceeded following the three stages suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994): data reduction, data display and drawing and verifying conclusions.

The data collected for each case study were divided in the following sets:

1. Data from the interviews with the class teachers and the GAL teachers
2. Data from the activities with the pupils
3. Data from the lesson and break observations
4. Data from the interviews with the head teacher
5. Data from school observations and documents related to the school
6. Data from my reflexive diary

The first four sets were analysed, whereas the last two sets were used to provide additional information regarding the research context. The analysis proceeded by means of systematic examination of similarities and differences emerging from the comparison of the data, initially, within data sets and, then, across data sets, in

order to identify patterns and summarize the data. This process was followed for each case study school first and then data across cases were compared and contrasted.

The first step in the analysis of each data set was data reduction. I tried to identify patterns within data sets, by reading and re-reading the data, using my research questions as a guide. For each data set, I created a coding frame, namely an index of all the provisional codes that emerged from my initial coding. This coding frame enabled me to make constant comparisons and test out the suitability of these codes to summarise all the data within each data set. It also facilitated the identification of codes that could be clustered together and thus, categories and subcategories were formed (Saldaña, 2009). All data subsumed under a category were copied and pasted in a new file and the appropriateness of the category was determined on the basis of the criteria of ‘internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity’ (Guba, 1978 as qtd in Patton, 2002, p. 465). In other words, it was checked whether the data were related and actually fitted that category and whether this category was essentially different from other categories. Thus, the accuracy, meaningfulness and inclusiveness of the categories were assessed against the data (Guba, 1978 as qtd in Patton, 2002), checking if there were data that did not fit into the categories developed or even challenged those categories.

The next step was to group the categories into fewer more abstract ‘explanatory or inferential’ categories, into themes (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 69). This abstracting was guided by the sensitizing concepts I had drawn from my literature review, which enabled me to critically analyse my data. This stage in the data analysis process was facilitated by means of data display. Specifically, I used networks to display the themes, the connections between them and the relations between the themes and their constituent categories and subcategories (Thomas, 2013). Then, I revisited my data and looked for confirming or disconfirming evidence so as to verify the validity of my themes and subthemes.

After the analysis within each data set, I analysed the data across data sets. The themes emerging from the teachers’ interviews and the activities with the pupils

were compared to the ones emerging from the observational data, to check whether the teachers' and pupils' constructions of cultural diversity based on the interviews and the activities were consistent with their constructions of cultural diversity based on their practices, actions and interactions observed. Then, the themes emerging from the teachers' interviews and the observational data were compared and contrasted to the ones emerging from the activities with the pupils and the observational data to reveal similarities and differences in their constructions of cultural diversity and the pupils' responses to potential intercultural education developments in their school and / or class. Finally, the themes emerging from the teachers' interviews and observational data regarding their practices were compared and contrasted with the themes emerging from the head teacher's interviews to identify similarities and differences in their constructions of cultural diversity and intercultural education. For the contextualisation of their constructions, the data from the school observations and the school documents and the data from my reflexive diary were used. The analysis across data sets enabled the identification of the ways in which the various stakeholders interacted and shaped constructions of cultural diversity and intercultural education in each school and class.

First, I analysed the data from St Lazarus school. For the other two schools, I used the coding frame and the themes that emerged from the analysis of the data from St Lazarus school as a starting point, while being open to new and contrasting ideas within each data set. For example, the analysis of the data from the ZEP school gave rise to additional categories, like 'ZEP features' and 'teachers' views about the ZEP', and new codes were subsumed under existing categories, such as 'democratic citizenship', 'social reconstruction' and 'relationship building' under the category 'teachers' beliefs about the purpose of education'. The new categories could still be grouped under the initial themes. After the data from all schools had been analysed, cross case analysis was performed, to identify similarities and differences in the constructions of cultural diversity and intercultural education across institutional contexts. Thus, cross-case comparisons enabled me to examine how differences across institutional contexts, such as the different composition of the pupil population in terms of ethnic, linguistic, religious and socioeconomic

background and the Ministry's different approach to the ZEP school, affect these constructions.

Coding, analytic memos and data displays helped me summarize my data and draw initially tentative conclusions, the validity of which was constantly tested against my data, looking for confirming and disconfirming evidence. It must be noted that in my data analysis, I took into account the context in which the data was collected as well as the possibility of the researcher effect, as they may have affected the quality of the data. In addition, I considered not only the participants' actions and words as represented in the transcripts and in my field notes, but also their silences and their inaction.

Consequently, the approach to data analysis could be described as both deductive and inductive (Thomas, 2003). While it was guided by the research questions and facilitated by the use of sensitizing concepts that had emerged from my literature review, it was also based on multiple readings and the systematic comparison of the data that led to the identification of emergent codes, categories and themes. It must be underlined that this is only one possible way of analysing the vast amount of data generated from this research, which was chosen because it seemed to best serve the purposes of this study. The data analysis and my interpretation of the data has undeniably been influenced by a number of factors, such as my ontological and epistemological assumptions, my decision to create critical ethnographic case studies, my literature review, my experiences and the degree of my participation in the field, the questions I asked during the interviews and the activities I designed for the children, the decisions I took about what to include in my field notes and interview transcripts, and my positionality. To minimize bias, my approach to data analysis was systematic and rigorous, as it was made explicit in this section. Various other steps were taken to enhance the validity and reliability of this research, which are the focus of the next section.

4.8 Validity and Reliability

The concepts of validity and reliability originate in quantitative research and there has been a lot of discussion in the literature regarding the applicability of these terms to the evaluation of the quality of qualitative research. In fact, several scholars have offered alternative terms and criteria for the validation of qualitative research (see Creswell, 2007 for an overview). For example, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that trustworthiness is a more appropriate term to refer to the rigour of naturalistic inquiry and it could be assessed by means of the following four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. On the other hand, other scholars (e.g. Cohen et al., 2007; Creswell, 2007; Silverman, 2013) suggest that validity and reliability can be applied to qualitative research, but the criteria used to assess them may differ from those used in quantitative research. The following paragraphs present the way validity and reliability were understood and addressed in this research.

Validity is understood as referring to the degree of accuracy and credibility of the research findings (Creswell, 2007; Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013); in other words, the extent to which they accurately represent the social phenomena they refer to (Hammersley, 1998). To enhance the validity of my research, I used several strategies commonly cited in qualitative research (see Creswell, 2007), such as prolonged stay in the field, member checking, thick description, triangulation, digital recording of interviews and activities, the use of a reflexive diary, the use of the constant comparative method in the analysis looking for disconfirming evidence, peer debriefing, and clarifying my positionality to the readers.

The extensive time I spent in the field contributed significantly to the accuracy of my findings. Being in each of the schools for at least four weeks – three for data collection and one for informing all participants about the study - over a period of three months facilitated my immersion into the culture of each school and the everyday life of the participants in the school. My prolonged engagement in the field contributed to the minimization of the reactivity effects, as the participants

gradually got used to my presence in the field and to the development of rapport and trust with the participants. Besides minimizing reactivity, my extensive stay in the field allowed for persistent observations and thick descriptions of what I observed. Being with and among people in the field helped me gain an insight into their actions and interactions in their natural context as well as facilitated my access to the participants' interpretations of their actions and interactions through informal conversations and interviews, which I sought, to avoid my misinterpretation of what I saw and heard in the field. Even during the interviews, I often summarised the interviewee's main points and asked for their confirmation of the validity of my interpretation. Member checking was extensively used in the field. However, following scholars (e.g. Hammersley & Traianou, 2012; Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013) who have underlined the potential problems in relation to member checking at the stage of the analysis, I decided not to use it at this stage, as it was considered to be unfeasible and inappropriate for the purposes of this research (see section 4.2 for further discussion).

Another strategy I used to secure the robustness and validity of my findings was triangulation of perspectives, research methods (Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013; Layder, 2013) and space (Denzin, 1970 as ctd. in Cohen et al., 2007). Examining understandings of cultural diversity, which influence constructions of intercultural education, from multiple perspectives, namely from the teachers', head teachers' and pupils' perspectives and using multiple research methods allowed me to capture a richer, more comprehensive and accurate picture of constructions of intercultural education and cultural diversity in each school than a single method or perspective would have allowed. Moreover, conducting my research in three schools with a different profile allowed for a more holistic view of the phenomenon under research and an understanding of how the institutional context may affect constructions of cultural diversity and intercultural education. Hence, triangulation of perspectives, methods and space contributed to a more in-depth and complete understanding, to corroborating evidence from different sources (Creswell, 2007) and thus, to a more accurate and credible representation of constructions of intercultural education and cultural diversity in the three Greek-Cypriot primary schools.

Furthermore, by recording the interviews and the activities with the children, I could ensure minimal loss of available data and an as accurate as possible representation of the participants' perspectives, while the field notes were inevitably selective, focusing on what seemed to be most relevant to my research focus. However, keeping a reflexive diary, where I recorded my impressions and my reflections on the research, separately from my field notes helped me keep the descriptions of what I observed separate from my own ideas. Moreover, it allowed me to take a systematic approach to checking my initial interpretations by looking for confirming or disconfirming evidence in the field.

This constant comparative method has been used throughout the data analysis process. Constantly comparing my codes, categories, themes and interpretations to the data to test them out and check whether they accurately reflect my data and whether there are any deviant cases has enabled my interpretations to be grounded in the data. This is also evident through my constant use of evidence from my data to validate my interpretation of my findings in the chapters in which I report and discuss my findings (Hammersley, 1998).

Another strategy used to enhance the validity of my research was peer debriefing (Creswell, 2007). Throughout the research process I reported the procedures followed to my supervisors who asked me questions to trigger my critical reflection on the choices I made and the procedures I followed. All our discussions were digitally recorded and I always wrote and sent them a summary of the debriefing. In this way, my supervisors provided an external check on the validity of the research process.

Validity as described above is often referred to as internal validity, distinguishing it, thus, from external validity. External validity refers to the extent to which the findings can be generalised. In line with the paradigm of social constructionism underpinning this research and the ensuing understanding of knowledge as context-specific, the purpose of this research has not been to draw generalisations. However, being provided with detailed information about the socio-cultural, political, and historical context of my study and about the case study schools

through my thick descriptions, readers will be able to assess the ‘transferability’ of my findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Reliability in the sense that replication of my research would lead to the same findings (Thomas, 2013) does not apply to this study, due to its naturalistic and interpretive nature. In naturalistic enquiry, people’s behaviour cannot be controlled and is influenced by several variables (Hammersley, 1998), such as time, place and the way the researcher’s role is perceived by the participants. Consequently, there is a high degree of unpredictability. Moreover, the construction of the study and the critical interpretation of the data have been influenced by my positionality and my theoretical background. Hence, if my research is replicated by another researcher, it is highly unlikely that it will lead to exactly the same findings. Therefore, reliability in this study has been construed as “the degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observer on different occasions.” (Hammersley, 1992 as qtd in Silverman, 2013, p. 284). To ensure that there is consistency and to allow for the cross-checking of the data, the same semi-structured observation and interview schedules were used across schools (see Appendices G-J). This allowed me to ensure that the same issues were examined across schools. In addition, to ensure that my questions in the interviews would be understood in the same way across participants and would render data relevant to my research focus, the interview schedules had been piloted with teachers and head teachers prior to the research. The digital recordings and the detailed transcripts of the interviews and activities also contributed to the consistency in the process of data analysis (Silverman, 2013).

Finally, as recommended by a number of scholars (Creswell, 2007; Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013; Hammersley, 2013), I have provided a detailed account of the research process, the theoretical background that has informed this study and the reasoning behind the choices and decisions made throughout the research. Moreover, I have clarified my positionality. Hence, the readers can assess the validity and reliability of my research. Furthermore, in the presentation and discussion of my findings I have included many different voices, namely head

teachers', teachers' and pupils', from different contexts, by using relevant data extracts, so that the reader does not rely solely on my account but is exposed to how cultural diversity and intercultural education are viewed from multiple perspectives in the research settings. Furthermore, I have clearly distinguished descriptions of what was observed and said from my interpretations, so that the reader can assess the validity of my interpretations (Patton, 2002; Spencer, 1989). Of course, it should not be falsely assumed that descriptions capture the reality observed and experienced. However, efforts have been made for the descriptions to represent the aspects of the reality that were relevant to my research focus as faithfully as possible (Hammersley, 1992).

The next section elaborates on the ethical considerations addressed by this study and further ethical dilemmas faced during the research process.

4.9 Ethical Considerations and Dilemmas

Ethical considerations have been addressed with due care and attention based on the British Educational Research Association's ethical guidelines (BERA, 2011) and my educated ethical disposition. This research has been approved by the Moray House School of Education Ethics Committee at the University of Edinburgh and the Ministry of Education and Culture in Cyprus. The major ethical issues considered in this research and how various ethical dilemmas were addressed are described below.

A basic ethical principle is respect (Pring, 2000; Alderson & Morrow, 2004; BERA, 2011; Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013), which permeated the whole research process. Respecting all participants' autonomy, I informed them orally and through an information leaflet about my research and made sure that they understood what it was about, what their participation involved and their right to withdraw at any time, prior to asking for their voluntary consent to participate in the research (Hammersley & Traianou, 2012) (see Appendices A-D for participant information leaflets and consent forms).

Viewing children as competent social actors, particular attention was paid to respecting their right to express their views freely on matters that concern them (UNCRC, Article 12). After I obtained the teachers' consent, I informed their pupils about my research in a clear, simplified and age-appropriate way, giving them the opportunity to ask questions and make an informed decision about whether to participate in the research. I also gave all pupils an illustrated, clearly and simply written information leaflet (see Appendix C). All pupils were also given an information letter and a consent form for their parents, which were available both in Greek and in English (see Appendices E-F – the Greek version can be provided upon request). Both versions were given to all pupils in the ZEP school. Parents were also given the opportunity to ask questions about the research by email or in person on a specific date and time, when I was at the school for this purpose. Opt-in forms were used for parents in Aphrodite and St Lazarus school, while following the head teacher's advice, opt-out forms were used in the ZEP school. Due to difficulties in communication with parents, as suggested by the head teacher, and my limited time in the field and the need to start the research as soon as possible, I decided to use opt-out forms in this school. After obtaining parents' consent, the pupils' consent was sought by means of a form especially designed for children (see Appendix D).

During the research, I faced various ethical dilemmas as regards parents' and pupils' consent. For example, there was sometimes a conflict between parents' and children's wishes. In the case where the parents had given their consent, but the pupil had not, I respected the child's wish and I did not include them in my fieldnotes. During the activities, they were left free to decide whether and when they wanted to join. In the case where the parents had not given their consent but the child wanted to participate, I initially did not include the pupil. However, as I noticed that the pupil then felt excluded and uncomfortable in a class where everybody else participated, I allowed the children to decide whether to participate or not. Nevertheless, I mentioned that notes would not be taken about pupils whose parents did not provide their consent and the recorded parts including their words would not be included in the data.

Obtaining consent was a continuous process of negotiation rather than a one-off event (Alderson & Morrow, 2004; Madison, 2005). Before all interviews I reminded the teachers and head teachers of their right not to answer questions or to withdraw from the interview at any stage and confirmed that they agreed to the recording of the interview. As regards the pupils, I acknowledge that the power imbalance between myself as an adult researcher and the children might have had an inhibiting effect on their freely expressing their wish not to take part in the research or to withdraw from it, especially as the research took place in school, where obedience is considered to be the 'right' thing (Gallagher, 2009) and they are used to being controlled rather than being seen as equals by adults (Punch, 2002). Therefore, I clarified that this research was not part of their school work and I used a child-friendly way to facilitate their negotiation of their consent throughout the research (Alderson & Morrow, 2004). Specifically, I created a colourful poster in each class with the names of the pupils and the dates when I would be in their school. The pupils were asked to draw a smiley face or a stop sign next to their name each day, indicating their wish to participate or withdraw.

Two other important ethical principles associated with respecting the participants' privacy are confidentiality and anonymity (Hammersley & Traianou, 2012). To address confidentiality, I took several measures. All data collected were stored in a safe place, to which I am the only one who has access and the recordings were transcribed by me. All participants' names have been replaced with pseudonyms and any information that could reveal the participants' and the schools' identity have been removed from the quotes used in this thesis and will be removed from quotes to be used in publications. Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that absolute confidentiality could not be guaranteed (Alderson & Morrow, 2004; Madison, 2005). For example, the staff who worked at the schools during my research can possibly identify the respondents whose quotes have been used. Viewing confidentiality and anonymity as ongoing concerns, rather than restricted to data collection (Gallagher, 2009), I decided not to send back a report of my findings to the participating schools, as this could threaten the participants' anonymity and, potentially, have negative consequences for them. As regards the children, they were informed in advance that if I realised that a child is in danger

or needs help, for example, because of being bullied or mistreated by other children, I would speak to his/her teacher about it, so that action could be taken to prevent further abuse.

Another key ethical issue is the avoidance of causing harm through the research (Madison, 2005; Hammersley & Traianou, 2012; Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013). Although this study was not expected to cause any harm, I paid attention to pupils' body language and cues during the activities, in case they felt some discomfort with the activity or topic of discussion, and I never asked a child to participate in the discussions unless they wanted to. An incident which caused me an ethical dilemma related to the issue of harm is St Lazarus head teacher's fear that I might harm the school by raising issues regarding the relationships between Turkish-Cypriot and Greek-Cypriot pupils through my activities and his warning to me not to deal with this issue during my activities. Although the Turkish-Cypriot Roma pupil in the 3rd grade was willing to speak about his experiences during the activities and he mentioned that he had seen bullying taking place, I refrained from asking him any relevant questions either during the activities or during the breaks, respecting the head teacher's concerns. In this way, however, I felt that I had silenced the child. Although I did not manage to do justice to him throughout my fieldwork, I have tried to do so through my research, by including my field notes in my analysis. In my field notes, I tried to record his interactions with his teacher and his classmates during the lesson and break observations as closely as possible. These interactions were equally or even more valuable and illuminating due to their spontaneity.

Respecting the research participants, their time and their significant contribution to this study, I gave them all a small gift on my last day in the field. This research hopes to bring benefits to them and the wider Cypriot educational community, by disseminating the findings of this study through articles in journals and presentations at conferences, to reach policy makers, teacher educators and, potentially, practitioners with an interest in this field. In this way, this study hopes to contribute to discussions in the field of education about how to achieve greater equity.

Finally, it must be stated that my respect towards the research participants was not restricted to asking for informed consent, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity, avoiding harm and bringing benefits to the participants and the wider educational community. Respect permeated the whole research process and was expressed continuously towards the participants through my whole approach towards them, which was characterized by genuine interest in their views; due regard for their opinions, wishes, and confidentiality; and appreciation for their valuable contribution to this research.

In the next two final sections, I provide my critical reflections on the research process. In the first section, I reflect on my multiple and fluid identities and roles in the field and in the second one, I provide my critical appraisal of my research.

4.10 My Roles and Identities in the Field

The researcher's identities and roles in the field and the way these are perceived by the research participants carry significant implications for the research and its findings. As Pink (2006) notes, '[o]ur informants tell and show us what they do because they are in a research situation with us as individuals' (p. 367).

As regards research with children, there are several different views about the researcher's role. Some scholars (e.g. Damon, 1977) argue that the only possible role for adult researchers is that of the detached observer due to the great differences between the worlds of adults and those of children. Others (e.g. Corsaro, 1985; Fine, 1987) argue that due to the differences in age and authority, adults can participate in children's worlds to some extent but not fully, while others (e.g. Mandell, 1988) suggest that adult researchers can become complete participants in the children's worlds. Viewing children as competent social actors, this study rejects the view that children's and adults' worlds are so dichotomous that adult researchers are confined to the role of detached observers of children's worlds. However, my initial decision was to assume this role, as explained below.

To retain my critical gaze over the processes, activities, actions and interactions and the context observed, I had decided to assume the role of the observer as an ‘outsider-looking-in’ (Gomm, 2008). However, I soon realized that this role did not help me gain a deeper understanding of the participants’ perspectives. For example, from the first days in the field, I realized that simply standing next to the children during breaks and taking notes made both children and myself feel uncomfortable and it did not always enable me to fully understand what was going on. A balance between detachment and involvement was needed. So, I decided to change my role to that of ‘observer-as-participant’ (Cohen et al., 2007). This role allowed me to move beyond my own understandings and interpretations of what I observed and elicit the participants’ meanings, motives and purposes underlying their actions (Pring, 2000; Cohen et al., 2007). This was achieved by means of informal conversations with the teachers and the children during breaks and sometimes even joining children’s games or discussions in the school yard. These friendly informal conversations helped me develop rapport with the participants and get to know them and understand them better. In combination with the length of my stay in the field, these conversations also contributed to minimizing reactivity, as the participants got to know me better and got used to my presence in their classrooms and in the school yard. Thus, I gradually stopped being seen as the exotic stranger, as was the case during the first few days in the field. However, this shift of my role and entering the participants’ worlds to some extent was not a straightforward process but involved constant negotiation of my role and power in the field.

Acknowledging the power imbalance between children and adults, this study does not support the possibility of gaining ‘completely involved membership’ in the children’s worlds, as suggested by Mandell’s (1988) ‘least-adult role’. To minimize this imbalance, I consciously tried to avoid assuming an interfering or authoritative role. I did not want to be seen as a teacher who was there to teach them and whom they were expected to obey. To make my intentions clear, I explained to all pupils why I was at their school from the very first day and I emphasised my wish to learn from them. To build rapport, I introduced myself using my first name and I paralleled myself and my research to themselves and

their school projects. I also expressed my respect for them and their views from the very beginning, by asking for their informed written consent to participate in my research and for their recommendations regarding the activities we would do together.

As regards my relation to the children, I assumed several different roles throughout the research. These included the role of the ‘unusual adult’, ‘who, whilst not pretending to be a child, seeks throughout to respect their views and wishes’ (Christensen, 2004, p. 174); the role of the ‘observer’ of pupils’ behaviour in class and initially, of their play during breaks (Fine & Sandstrom, 1988); the role of the ‘friend’, whom some children teased or shared secrets with (Fine & Sandstrom, 1988) and the role of the facilitator of activities. None of these roles was fixed or ascribed to me by all pupils. Like in Christensen’s (2004) ethnographic fieldwork with children, my relationship with the children was characterised by ‘fluidity and shifting relations of power between us’ (p. 171). For example, I was not seen as a ‘friend’ by all pupils and at all times. This was particularly evident on the last day in Aphrodite school. While many 6th grade pupils asked me to write a message on their shirts, as they did with all their friends, so as to keep these shirts as memorabilia from their last day in primary schools, some of the 3rd grade pupils asked me whether I would be their teacher the next year. Hence, the older the pupils, the more possible it seemed to be for me to be seen as a friend. Moreover, while, when invited to play with pupils during breaks, I had to follow the rules of the game set by the children, these children had to follow my instructions during the whole-class activities. But, in the latter case, some children – mainly boys from the 3rd, 5th and 6th grade - expressed their resistance through their refusal to participate in some activities or in the research in general, or through their silence during the activities. These examples illustrate the fluid and shifting nature of the power relations between the children and me.

As regards my identity, my Greek-Cypriot origin was intentionally not revealed to the children. I introduced myself as a student at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland and my Greek accent led to the assumption that I was Greek - hence, a migrant in Cyprus. This migrant status combined with my research topic and my

expressed interest in different cultures facilitated building rapport with most minority ethnic pupils, who were willing to share their school experiences with me. However, my gender seemed to create a barrier to creating as close relationships with boys as with girls, who were more willing to include me in their worlds, inviting me to play with them and chatting with me during breaks. Nevertheless, I did not restrict myself to observing, and participating in, girls' games, but I made sure that my break observations were divided among different friendship groups.

The adult participants viewed me as the researcher, not in the sense of an academic but of a PhD candidate, in need of their help to gather data for her thesis. My position was clarified from the very beginning through the information leaflets and was reinforced through my whole approach during the research process, which was characterised by my stance of 'not knowing' (Madison, 2005; Nunkoosing, 2005), my genuine interest in their views and experiences and my appreciation for their contribution to my research. It was a bit challenging after the first lesson observations, as most teachers expected feedback on what I had just observed, but I restricted myself to questions for clarifications about their practices and the pupils. I tried, thus, to make clear that I was not there to judge their work, but to learn from them.

For the adult participants, I was both an insider and an outsider. Due to my being a PhD candidate and having a Greek accent, the first impression I gave was that of an outsider to their world. I was aware that this could have an inhibiting effect on some of the participants, as both attributes - the link to academia and to 'kalamarades' (the educated Greeks) - can carry connotations of a power status in Greek-Cypriot society. Therefore, I tried to highlight the common aspects of our identities and to build trust and rapport with them through my friendly and respectful stance towards them from my first days in schools. For example, in the information leaflet, I addressed teachers and head teachers as colleagues and I mentioned that I am an EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teacher. By underlining my insider status in the school world, I tried to express my empathy and reduce any sense of threat that my presence in the school and in the classrooms

might cause. Prior to or during the first interviews I also revealed that both my parents are Greek-Cypriot refugees. Stressing our shared nationality, I wanted to encourage them to openly share their views about the political, historical and sociocultural context in Cyprus in relation to their beliefs and understandings of cultural diversity and intercultural education. Moreover, sharing the same gender and similar age with most teachers and sharing information about myself, rather than simply directing questions to them, seem to have contributed to most of them feeling quite comfortable with me.

Power was fluid and negotiated in my relations with adult participants, too. Although my power lies in my determination of the research topic and the research process as well as the analysis and interpretation of the data, the research participants were the gatekeepers to the research settings and to their own worlds and they decided when and to what extent they allowed me to enter. Most research participants expressed an interest in my research and were very supportive throughout the research. Their willingness to help was evident from the rich data generated through the interviews and the participants' honesty and openness during our interviews and informal conversations, where most teachers and head teachers openly expressed their fears and concerns in relation to cultural diversity and intercultural education.

However, not all research participants responded in the same way and in some cases, I felt that I had no power at all. For example, before conducting the whole-class activities in the 3rd grade in St Lazarus school, where there was a Turkish-Cypriot Roma pupil, the head teacher warned me, as noted above, that I should not delve into issues related to the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot relationships, as this topic was too sensitive and could give rise to Turkish-Cypriot parents' complaints. As the class teacher was absent on the day of the activities, the head teacher himself was in class throughout the activities. I believe that the existence of Turkish-Cypriot pupils in this school rendered my research focus particularly sensitive and perceived by the head teacher probably as threatening to the reputation of the school and to himself as the school leader. I did my best to reassure him that I had no intention to harm the school or the research participants

and I respected his wishes and retained my polite and respectful attitude towards him throughout the research.

4.11 Reflexive Auto-Critique

While I have included my critical reflections on most of the issues dealt with in this chapter in the relevant sections, in this section, I provide my critical appraisal of my research, considering strengths and limitations in terms of my impact on the research, my participants and the procedures followed.

As regards myself as the researcher, my origin from Cyprus, my familiarity with the context and my teaching experience in primary schools facilitated my understanding of the research context and my building rapport with most participant teachers and head teachers. Furthermore, the fact that I was born and educated in Greece, where I have also had my teaching experience, gave me a different perspective and facilitated my uncovering of oppressive forces operating in Greek-Cypriot primary education. Moreover, my personal experiences as the child of Greek-Cypriot refugees raised in Greece and a postgraduate student in Britain have contributed to my heightened awareness of what it is like being the Other and, thus, to my empathy for minority ethnic pupils' experiences. I think that the fact that I come from a family of Cypriot refugees contributed to the teachers' honesty in their replies, as some teachers clearly expressed their racism against the Turks, probably assuming that I shared these views, too.

However, despite my constant efforts to minimize reactivity effects, my presence in the field affected teachers' and pupils' behaviour. For example, being aware of the purpose of my study, some teachers adapted the content of the observed lessons accordingly. For example, they chose to teach a text related to the topic of cultural diversity that would give rise to a discussion on this topic. This proved to be positive rather than negative for my research, as such lessons helped me gain a deeper understanding of the pupils' perspectives. Moreover, they enabled me to realise how the issue of cultural diversity was dealt with in the pupils' textbooks

and what the teachers' understandings of intercultural education was. However, it is uncertain whether the way the teachers approached these lessons would have been the same if I had not been present. As regards the pupils, my presence in the school yard sometimes resulted in some of the pupils talking to me rather than engaging in their own activities. I tried to use these opportunities to elicit information from the children about the games they usually played and their friendship groups or to ask them some questions that had emerged from my observations or the activities.

As regards the participants, the fact that the three schools had been recommended to me as schools where there was an interest in intercultural education entails that they were not necessarily representative of Greek-Cypriot primary schools. Nevertheless, they constituted information-rich cases and thus, fitted the purpose of my research best, which was the in-depth critical examination of constructions of intercultural education and cultural diversity. Similarly, most teachers who volunteered to participate in the research expressed an interest in intercultural education. This allowed me to cast light on how the constructions of intercultural education by people who understand the relevance of intercultural education and are willing to promote it are shaped by the institutional and the wider political, sociocultural, historical and economic context as well as by their personal and professional histories.

As regards the children, I tried to include all pupils who consented to participate in the research both in my field notes and in the activities, by conducting whole-class activities. However, time restrictions, selective attention and the fact that I could not be omnipresent meant that I had to choose certain pupils to focus on during breaks, especially when the class size was large. My decisions were driven by the criteria of feasibility and relevance, namely which pupils I could realistically observe and which pupils I could draw richer data from. Moreover, children's contributions to the discussions during the activities were not equal, despite my efforts to encourage all pupils' participation, by emphasizing how important it was for me to listen to all pupils' views and that there were no right or wrong replies. The sentence completion task, which was individually

completed, ensured all pupils' inclusion to some extent. However, as this activity required writing skills, two pupils could not complete it on their own and they completed it with my help, which may have affected the degree to which their replies were honest. Furthermore, this activity was time-consuming and probably a bit challenging for the 1st grade pupils, who had only learnt to read and write that year.

As regards the research procedures, observations were driven by my research topic and focused on what I considered relevant to my research questions. My perceptions of the relevance of what was observed were unavoidably influenced by my theoretical background, my experiences and my values. Hence, my field notes are partial and subjective, as they present events, actions and interactions I considered relevant to my research in more detail than others and these are presented in the way I experienced them. Moreover, despite my constant efforts to build trust and rapport with all participants, some of the participants' words and actions may not have been honest. Instead, they may reflect what the participants thought was expected of them or what would create a favourable impression.

As Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) highlight, "[i]t is not possible for research to be 100 per cent valid" (p. 133). Nevertheless, conscious efforts have been made to achieve an as high degree of validity and reliability as possible, by using several strategies (see 4.8), and to contribute to knowledge in the field of inter- / multi-cultural education and cultural diversity in Cyprus and internationally.

4.12 Conclusion

This chapter has delineated the methodological framework of this research; the procedures followed for data collection and analysis; the justification for all the choices made throughout the research process; my roles and identities in the field; the ways in which ethical issues, validity and reliability have been addressed; as well as my critical appraisal of my research. As has become evident through this chapter and as Patton (2002) warns, ideal research conditions are rare. However, I

made considerable efforts to make conscious and well-weighed decisions about the best way to approach my study and to be responsive to the situations that emerged throughout my research, having as an ultimate aim to ensure the ethical conduct of quality research. The transparency of the research process offered by this chapter is intended to help the readers to assess the validity, reliability, robustness and credibility of my research and my findings, which are presented in the next chapters.

CHAPTER 5: CONSTRUCTIONS OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION IN St LAZARUS SCHOOL

This chapter and the next two ones report the findings regarding constructions of cultural diversity and intercultural education, each focusing on one of the case study schools. For this purpose, each chapter draws on the head teacher's and the participant teachers' accounts; on data generated through the activities with the pupils; and on data from lesson, break and school observations in each school. As part of the analytical process, the following themes were identified as prominent in each of the schools and, therefore, are used to report and critically engage with the data in each chapter:

- School ethos and intercultural education
- School leadership and intercultural education
- Teachers' political, historical and sociocultural narratives and intercultural education
- Teacher agency and intercultural education
- Children's understandings, experiences of and responses to cultural diversity

For a deeper understanding of each case and the interpretations provided, each chapter begins by describing the school context and introducing the research participants. It continues by presenting and discussing the aforementioned themes, considering both recurrent as well as divergent examples. The presentation and discussion of the findings in each school in each of these three chapters will contribute to a more elaborate discussion of the findings in the cross-case analysis in Chapter 8.

This chapter reports the ways in which intercultural education and cultural diversity were constructed in St Lazarus school: a school with mixed pupil population in a low to middle SES area of Nicosia.

5.1 School Context

St Lazarus school is located very close to the borders which separate the southern part of Nicosia from the northern part which is occupied by the Turks. Being situated in a working-class area, the school attracts many non-Greek-Cypriot pupils, due to the relatively low rents in this area. According to data provided by the head teacher, in 2013-2014 the school had 85 pupils, whose families were evenly divided into a third of each of the following categories: Greek-Cypriot parents; ‘foreign’ (*‘allodapoi’*) parents; and mixed marriages – ‘foreign’ mother and Greek-Cypriot father. The main countries of origin of the ‘foreign’ parents were Georgia, Bulgaria and Romania and to a lesser extent, Syria and China. There was also a Turkish-Cypriot Roma family with three boys, two of whom were in the participating classes. Most pupils were Orthodox Christian, but there was also a minority of Muslim and Catholic pupils.

In contrast to the multiethnic composition of the pupil population, all twelve staff members were Greek-Cypriot and Orthodox Christian, except for one Maronite teacher (for information about the Maronite community in Cyprus see 1.2.1). Moreover, as in most Greek-Cypriot schools, the staff was predominantly female with only three male teachers.

The most striking feature of this school for me as a visitor on the first day in the field was the sight of many flags, conveying competing messages. As this was the first school I visited, I was surprised to see three flags - a Greek, a Cypriot and an EU flag - above the main entrance. Later, I discovered that this was a common sight at the main entrances of Cypriot schools and in alignment with the MoEC’s directives. The sight of these flags combined with a guardhouse with a Turkish-Cypriot and a Turkish flag in the background reminded everyone of the ongoing

conflict daily. The divide between ‘us’ and ‘them’ was evident. However, inside the school premises, big paintings of flags from various countries on a school yard wall signalled that Cyprus is a multiethnic and culturally diverse society. It was evident that I was in a borderland. This caused me both some tension and curiosity to explore what everyday school life was like for the people who lived and worked in this geographic, political and cultural borderland.

5.2 Research Participants

In this school, the research participants were:

Pseudonym	Position
Antonis (Greek-Cypriot (GC))	Head teacher
Dina (GC)	1 st grade teacher (6-year-olds)
Helen (GC)	3 rd grade teacher (8-year-olds)
Georgia (GC Maronite)	6 th grade teacher (11-year-olds)
Despina (GC)	GAL (Greek as an additional language) teacher

The head teacher had 26 years of teaching experience and held this position in St Lazarus school for four years. The teachers’ teaching experience ranged from 4 to 18 years and in this school from 1 to 4 years. All the teachers were in their 30s, apart from Despina, who was in her 40s. Despina was a 2nd grade teacher who also taught most GAL sessions and, therefore, participated in the study as a GAL teacher. In the report of the findings, Helen’s voice is not as prominent as the other two class teachers’ voices. This is because Helen was more reticent in her replies than the other teachers, as suggested by her often brief replies, her refusal to answer some questions and her concern about the length of the interview. Her stance could be attributed to the sensitivity of the topic and the fact that her views

were, in some cases, contrary to the socially desirable ones and, therefore, she may have felt uncomfortable revealing them.

In the three participating grades, almost all pupils (38 out of 39) took part in the research. In all classes, pupils whose parents were both Greek-Cypriot were less than 50%, while for the remainder of the pupils either the mother or both parents were non-Greek-Cypriots. Moreover, in all classes there were some Muslim pupils. The pupils' socio-economic status was described by their teachers as low to middle and the vast majority of the non-Greek-Cypriot pupils stated that they spoke their mother tongue at home.

Having outlined the research context and the participants, the following sections focus on the presentation and discussion of the key themes identified in the data generated in this school.

5.3 School Ethos and Intercultural Education

The school ethos is part of the school culture (Donnelly, 2000; Glover & Coleman, 2005). Drawing on Glover and Coleman's (2005) definition of these two terms on the basis of their extensive literature review, school culture is understood as encompassing the 'environmental, organisational and experiential features of school...[which] offer a context for teaching and learning', while the school ethos focuses on the 'subjective values and principles underpinning policy and practice' (p. 266). Similarly, Donnelly (2000) suggests that school ethos refers to 'the prevailing cultural norms, assumptions and beliefs' reflected in 'formal and informal expressions of school members' (p. 136-137). The school ethos is not understood as static and fixed, but as 'an ongoing, evolving construct' which emerges 'out of the dynamic interactions of school authorities, staff, pupils and parents and varying interpretations of the overall purpose of education' (Nelson, 2008, p. 1731). It permeates all aspects of the operation of the school and affects practice (Munn, 2002). This section critically examines St Lazarus school ethos in the 'experienced' sense (McLaughlin, 2005), focusing on the beliefs and values

regarding cultural diversity reflected in the ways in which cultural diversity was represented and addressed at the institutional level.

St Lazarus school environment and institutional and teachers' discourses and practices in relation to cultural diversity indicated the absence of a uniform ethos. The school ethos reflected the competing ideologies of Hellenocentrism and interculturalism, which coexist in the national education policy discourse. The negotiation of the MoEC's policies and guidelines at the school level to best serve their disadvantaged pupils reflected an ethos of care. However, the absence of a shared school vision, and school policies on intercultural education and discrimination in St Lazarus school resulted in mainly ad hoc and inconsistent practices, which conveyed contradictory values regarding cultural diversity, as explained below.

On the one hand, in line with the MoEC's guidelines, the existence of national symbols, such as the three flags at the entrance of the school and Orthodox Christian icons in most classrooms and offices, reflected a Hellenocentric and Orthodox Christian ethos. This was reinforced by daily processes, such as the Orthodox Christian morning prayer, and national commemorative events, which provided a framework that legitimized expressions of ethnic nationalism and reinforced the divide between 'us' and 'them'. This is illustrated by slogans like '*We will fight to make the Turks leave our country*' and '*Our homeland is Greece*'. These slogans were used at the 25th March school event, which commemorated the Greek revolution against the Ottoman occupation in 1821. The event ended with the head teacher drawing a parallel between Greek history and the modern Cypriot reality:

The 25th of March is the day of the liberation of Greece, but our Cyprus today is still in the hands of the Turkish Attila. They keep our towns and our villages and we are still waiting. (Antonis)

Antonis' words resonate with the unilateral victimhood narrative regarding the conflict, which reproduces essentialist understandings of 'us' – the good ones, the victims – and 'them' – the barbarians, the enemies (Spyrou, 2002, 2006; Zembylas, 2010d; Charalambous et al., 2013). Phrases like '*our Cyprus*' and '*our*

towns and our villages’ suggest a narrow understanding of the nation, which excludes the Turkish-Cypriots who inhabit the occupied part, and raise questions as to who ‘we’ are: exclusively the Greek-Cypriots or including the ethnically diverse members of the audience, which reflected the ethnic diversity in society? The aforementioned processes, practices and othering discourses are aligned with the long-established Ministry-led positioning of Hellenocentrism and Orthodox Christianity at the core of Greek-Cypriot education and contribute to constructing an Orthodox Christian Greek identity in opposition to the primary ‘other’, the ‘Turks’ (Spyrou, 2002, 2006; Zembylas et al., 2011; Charalambous et al., 2013).

On the other hand, the big paintings of flags from various countries on the school yard wall, and one-off events that aimed at ‘*intercultural acquaintance*’ (Antonis), such as food festivals and the European day of languages, reflected some of the school’s efforts to acknowledge and respond to the cultural diversity in the pupil population. To best respond to the needs of its pupil population, the school took several measures. For example, regarding the GAL sessions, instead of having beginners’ and intermediate learners’ groups of five to eight pupils as specified by the MoEC’s guidelines, it provided these sessions at an individual level or in groups of a maximum of three pupils for more targeted support. Moreover, the school seemed to function as a bridge between the pupils and the local community, by providing them with information about various community clubs and activities - ‘*whatever will give them the opportunity to communicate*’ (Antonis). Furthermore, the school tried to transcend the barriers posed by its limited funds and provide pupils with the same opportunities for extra-curricular activities as pupils in other areas have:

[W]e haven’t reduced what we wanted to do, because, unfortunately, the children are poorer here... They will go to see the same plays as the others, they will go on the same trips, they will do the same educational visits. We don’t reduce even if there is no central support... (Antonis)

All these measures seem to reflect the head teacher’s and the staff’s good intentions to assist their pupils, by helping them acquire the dominant language and culture. Thus, an ethos of care seemed to prevail.

However, these efforts did not seem to be accompanied by efforts to recognize and include diverse knowledges and voices in school life and in the learning process. For example, as two teachers reported, the pupil council had a marginal position in the school. This was attributed by Dina to teachers' lack of time to support the pupils. It could also be argued, however, that prevailing constructions of children as immature and incompetent created barriers to the inclusion of children's voices in the school decision-making processes:

We had academic committees, which didn't help, which didn't take care of the children. Will the children themselves, the 6-year-olds and the 7-year-olds, come to express views about education? (Antonis)

Negative assumptions about the children's competence were also reflected in school practices, which seemed to provide no space for dialogue between children and staff members. For example, a school assembly I observed was restricted to the head teacher's monologue, which consisted mainly of orders to the pupils about what to do and what to avoid doing. However, as plenty of research in pupils' perspectives has shown (e.g. Phelan, Davidson and Cao, 1992; Rudduck, Chaplain & Wallace, 1996; McIntyre, 2004; McCluskey et al., 2012), pupils, being "expert witnesses" of teaching, learning and school life (Busher, 2012, p. 113), can provide valuable accounts of their educational experiences, their needs, interests and difficulties.

Besides pupils' voices and knowledges, their parents' voices and knowledges seemed to be largely absent, too. Only ten couples participated in the parents' council, six of whom were Greek-Cypriots, two from mixed marriages, and two non-Greek-Cypriots. Like in other Cypriot studies (e.g. Panayiotopoulos & Nicolaidou, 2007; Theodorou, 2008; Hajisoteriou & Angelides, 2016a), the staff members tended to attribute parents' low participation in the parents' council and generally, in their children's education to their low socioeconomic status and educational background, to indifference or '*different priorities*'. The belief prevailed that '*many [parents] self-exclude themselves*' (Antonis). These deficit views of working-class, majority and minority ethnic parents did not seem to assist the staff members in identifying and addressing cultural and institutional

constraints to parents' participation. For instance, all communication with the pupils' parents was in Greek. This would probably exclude non-Greek-Cypriot parents who spoke no or little Greek from school life. Moreover, the measures taken by the school to engage parents in school life seemed to reflect the misrecognition of the working class, minority or majority ethnic parents:

We have a meeting with parents at the beginning of the year where we present the way we work; they are invited to the various school celebrations; and there is time for parents' visits. Each teacher has a specific time per week for meetings with parents. (Dina, 1st gr.)

The focus of these measures is solely on showing or explaining to parents how things are done in this school rather than treating them, as suggested in the literature (e.g. Delpit, 1995; Gillborn & Mirza, 2000), as resources to help teachers develop an awareness of their pupils' home cultures and / or as partners to ensure the best educational outcomes for their children. Hence, diverse knowledges, experiences and voices seemed to be largely misrecognized and marginalized.

The absence of a commonly shared vision, school policies and a coherent and systematic whole-school approach to diversity issues was evident at the classroom level, where different beliefs and values regarding cultural diversity were promoted by different teachers. This was evident even in the classroom decoration. Although all classroom walls were full of decorations, posters, visuals and pupils' work, in the 1st and 3rd grade classrooms, there were no elements reflecting the multiculturalism in the pupil population. However, there were national symbols, such as the Cypriot flag and an Orthodox Christian icon. In contrast, in the 6th grade (Georgia's) classroom there were no religious icons or flags. In line with the MoEC's policy of 'I don't forget', there was a corner entitled '*Cyprus, beloved homeland!*' with a drawing of the island of Cyprus surrounded by photos of some of the occupied parts of the island, reinforcing, thus, the divide between 'us' and 'them'. However, the rest of the 6th grade classroom decoration reflected an inclusive and pluralistic ethos. For instance, cardboard balloons with different messages, such as 'Let's accept diversity', 'Let's change the world together!', and 'Always be yourself!', in the pupils' home languages and in Greek, reflected and promoted respect for multiculturalism and multilingualism. The decoration of this

classroom reflects Georgia's effort to respond to the contradictory expectations set by the MoEC: on the one hand, the promotion of 'I don't forget' as an educational objective and on the other hand, the promotion of intercultural education. Hence, while in most classrooms, the decoration reflected a mainly nationalist and Orthodox Christian-centred ethos, in Georgia's classroom, the decoration reflected the simultaneous promotion of a nationalist and an inclusive and pluralistic ethos, reflecting the contradictory ideologies of Hellenocentrism and interculturalism in the education policy discourse.

The teachers' different approaches to the cultural diversity in their classes reflected different beliefs about cultural diversity. Low expectations seemed to be reflected by most teachers' efforts to '*adjust the level*' (Dina, 1st gr.) of what was described by all staff members as a demanding curriculum that '*doesn't cater for children whose language isn't Greek*' (Dina, 1st gr.):

I try to do things that will help them, but not of a high level-ok, that's why I like it...Maybe because I like preparing more simplified things to help them rather than do [things] of a very high level. Of course, this will happen at some point-at another school. (Helen, 3rd gr.)

Driven by the desire '*to help*' their working-class, minority and majority ethnic pupils, most teachers simplified the curriculum. This may reflect their response to the reported absence of a systematic and intensive approach to GAL learning by MoEC, which meant that some 'other-language-speaking' pupils might not have reached an adequate level of Greek language competence to fully participate in the lesson. However, the simplification of the curriculum ignores the knowledges and experiences the children bring from home and may result in denying them a rigorous education (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). In fact, Dina and Helen stated that they '*occasionally*' asked their pupils to say a few words in their home languages or talk about their own experiences. Like the one-off celebrations of diversity at the school level, such non-systematic efforts seemed to sustain the misrecognition and marginalization of minority ethnic children's knowledges and cultures, by treating them as exotic (see Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997; Banks, 2006 [1988]; Portera, 2008, 2011) rather than as having equal status to the knowledge included in the curriculum. Moreover, religious diversity did not seem to be recognized in

the 1st and 3rd grade, where Muslim pupils were found to participate in the Orthodox Christian morning prayer. Both Sana in the 1st grade and Akim in the 3rd grade, the only Muslim pupils in these classes, made the sign of the cross and tried to repeat the words of the prayer, probably in an effort to fit in. Low expectations regarding the children's academic achievement reflected by the simplification of the curriculum and the misrecognition of minority ethnic children may have contributed to the reputation of the school as '*a school of low performances*' (Georgia, 6th gr.), as low expectations can have a negative impact on children's effort and engagement in learning (Rosenholtz & Simpson, 1984; Steele, 1992; Cummins, 2009) and on their academic achievement (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968; Steele, 1992; Heckmann, 2008; Kyles & Olafson, 2008).

In contrast, the lesson observations revealed Georgia's constant efforts to include all her pupils in the lesson, which reflected her belief in all her pupils' capacity to achieve. Moreover, she treated cultural diversity as an asset and acting as a role model, she performed her own diverse linguistic and religious identity in class and, when given the opportunity, at the school level. For example, regarding linguistic diversity, Georgia devoted several lessons on the value of plurilingualism and the retention of pupils' home languages and along with her pupils performed the fairytale 'Little Red Riding Hood' in their home languages at the school celebration for the European day of languages. As regards religious diversity, as observed and reported by Georgia, she explained to her pupils that each could silently say any prayer they liked during the morning prayer. Moreover, she did not say part of the prayer said by the pupils and she made the sign of the cross in the Catholic way. As she explained:

[Y]ou must accept each one, even their teacher, with whatever they bring into class. I was always irritated by the fact that they made me make the sign of the cross as something else...

Georgia's experiences of discrimination as a Maronite pupil in Greek-Cypriot schools seemed to have contributed to her sensitivity to, and respect for, difference in her class, which she consciously validated through her words and her own example. Unlike her colleagues' simplification of the curriculum, lesson

observations showed that Georgia systematically enriched the curriculum, by introducing multiple perspectives to her pupils by means of other resources, such as videos, articles, and her personal life stories of discrimination, resilience and success. She also invited her pupils to critically engage with their own experiences, with popular discourses about difference in Greek-Cypriot society and with the institutionalized representations of otherness, by, for example, challenging the negative, essentialist, static images of the Turks recreated through the school national commemorative events:

G: In the celebration on the 25th of March did you see anything wrong? What impression did it give you about the Turks?

Pupils: That they are bad.

G: I noticed that some of your classmates felt uncomfortable with some of the things that were said about the Turks.

Sofia: Not all of them are bad. Some are bad and some are good.

Georgia encouraged her pupils to critically engage with and deconstruct institutional and societal discourses about othered groups, including the ‘arch-enemy’, the ‘Turks’. Racism, gender inequalities, classism and disablism were among the topics discussed during the lesson observations as part of the Greek Language and the Geography lessons. Georgia also invited her pupils to take action to fight injustice and inequalities. For example, in a Geography lesson I observed she asked them to prepare a poster in support of the rights of the Amazon tribes, whose existence is threatened by the destruction of the forests they live in by the whites who hold the power in that area. For homework, they had to write a letter to the presidents of Peru and Brazil asking them to stop the destruction of the Amazon forests. Through her practices, Georgia tried to help her pupils develop a critical consciousness and their competence to act as agents for social justice, as her words to them reveal:

...you, as the new generation must fight against any type of inequality. If you change views, then the society will change in the future.

Understanding her role as an agent of change, Georgia's aim was her pupils' empowerment and confidence to challenge the status quo.

Georgia's vision contrasted with the rest of the teachers' narrow understandings of the purpose of education as teaching them *'the basics'* (Helen) and *'adjust[ing] them to the Cypriot culture and to the Greek language'* to help them *'integrate into society'* (Dina). Having received no professional support for the promotion of intercultural education, these dominant group teachers' agency seemed to be restricted by these narrow framings of the purpose of education in instrumentalist terms, which did not encourage them to engage with issues of power and justice. Instead, they restricted them to the traditional role of the transmitter of the dominant culture and the knowledge and skills needed in Greek-Cypriot society, treating their pupils as empty vessels rather than as resources and co-constructors of knowledge. Thus, the minority ethnic pupils' assimilation into the dominant language and culture was pursued, while their knowledges remained marginalized in most classes. Even Georgia conceptualised the purpose of education as *'acquir[ing] knowledge, skills and stances'*, possibly due to the absence of alternative professional discourses in her school. However, her practices, as described above, extended far beyond this conceptualisation and reflected an understanding of the political transformative role of education as a means for *'social reconstruction for equity and justice'* (Gorski, 2008) and an understanding of her role as change agent.

The contradictory beliefs and values promoted by different teachers', or even the same teachers', approaches to cultural diversity and the different understandings of the purpose of education reflect the absence of a clear and coherent philosophy of education underpinning the multiple reforms recently introduced by the MoEC and the absence of a shared school vision, values and policies that could guide teachers' practices. The absence of a systematic whole-school approach to discrimination was criticized by Georgia:

There is no definite policy as to what we do during break, for example. We don't know. I may see sometimes when I'm out that a pupil is alone, for example Ahmet, and I tell the others that they should play with him...but

there is no policy. This happens sporadically - if I see it and if I understand it...

The absence of measures to monitor and combat discrimination resulted in the teachers' dealing with pupils' discriminatory attitudes and actions – if noticed - in a random way, giving contradictory messages to pupils. However, most staff members, including the head teacher, saw no need to define relevant school policies and establish a whole school approach to eliminating different forms of prejudice and discrimination. The head teacher and Helen noted that there had been some incidents of bullying and discrimination in the past, with which they had dealt *'by talking to the parents, ok with some comments, it stopped...I don't notice anything now'* (Helen, 3rd gr.). Discrimination seemed to be attributed to the actions of individuals and treated as individual incidents or as something that had already been dealt with and, therefore, required no further action. This narrow understanding of discrimination exhibited by most staff members did not seem to enable them to critically analyse institutional and teachers' discourses and practices to identify and eliminate discrimination at all levels: personal, cultural and institutional.

Acting as an 'activist professional' (Sachs, 2003; Hayes et al, 2006), Georgia tried to bring about changes to the predominantly Hellenocentric and Orthodox Christian-centred school ethos in several ways. For example, she recommended the collaboration of their school with a Turkish school, but in vain:

[E]ven within the staff there was the belief that a school on the Green Line must not cooperate with the Turks. We cannot change these beliefs as individual staff members. This view needs to be supported by the school leadership in order to challenge stereotypes.

Lack of senior management and peer support rendered Georgia's efforts fruitless. The rest of the staff members' resistance could be attributed to the perceived high risk involved in such transformative activities due to the unresolved conflict. This resistance also suggests the lack of readiness and possibly willingness to redefine the relationship with the Turks, which was evident in the interviews with the dominant group teachers (see 5.5 for a detailed discussion). Georgia also recommended the development of a school vision and school policies and

upgrading the role of the pupil council at the end-of-year self-assessment staff meeting. Throughout the year, she had also prepared three action plans for the school - on environmental issues, on discipline and on delinquency - on her own initiative. However, it is questionable whether these action plans would be endorsed and implemented by the rest of the teachers.

To sum up, the ‘experienced’ school ethos reflected the staff members’ efforts to combine the conflicting ideologies of Hellenocentrism and interculturalism found in the policy discourse. However, institutional and most teachers’ practices did not extend beyond the celebration of diversity and measures to address the pupils’ linguistic and cultural deficit. Consequently, a Hellenocentric and Orthodox Christian-centred ethos prevailed, while contradictory values and beliefs about cultural diversity were promoted and discrimination at all levels remained largely unaddressed. Georgia attempted to negotiate the school ethos and build a more inclusive, culturally responsive, democratic and egalitarian ethos. Nevertheless, unless the head teacher is convinced about the necessity for change and involved in the process, it is extremely difficult even for the most committed individual teachers to effect change (Tarozzi, 2014). The next section turns to school leadership and intercultural education.

5.4 School Leadership and Intercultural Education

This section examines the ‘intended’ or ‘aspirational’ ethos (McLaughlin, 2005), focusing on the head teacher’s, Antonis’, views and practices regarding cultural diversity, intercultural education and his leadership style. In Antonis’ narrative, there were many contradictions in his views about the cultural diversity in school and his and the teachers’ roles. Despite his justice-oriented concerns, his limited understanding of discrimination and intercultural education, his negative stereotypes about working-class majority and minority ethnic parents, the absence of support by the Ministry and his single leadership style did not seem to assist him in leading equity-oriented school reform.

On the one hand, Antonis viewed the multiculturalism in the school as '*not always just challenge, but problems and stress*' because of the great variety in pupils' needs and in the pupils' and their parents' ways of thinking. His relatively negative view of multiculturalism in the school may be related to his feeling overwhelmed and powerless to some extent. These feelings seemed to result partly from his relatively little prior experience with the great extent of diversity present in St Lazarus school. Despite his twenty-six years of teaching experience, this high degree of cultural diversity in Greek-Cypriot schools was a relatively recent phenomenon. Additionally, the '*minimal*' support by the MoEC and the absence of supportive educational structures seem to have reinforced his feeling of powerlessness, which must have been particularly frustrating for a school leader:

The theory should have been accompanied by the corresponding changes: increase in the funding of these schools, selection of the teachers, teachers' professional development, parents' education, development of programmes for parents and they should emanate from the centre [MoEC] – centrally, not from each school to work on its own and to rely on the good faith of the teachers and the head teacher...

Antonis strongly criticized the MoEC's limited support for intercultural education. He explicitly expressed his dissatisfaction and frustration with the MoEC's policies and the curriculum reform, which, as he stated, '*aimed at homogeneous schools. Nothing has been done [for schools with 'other-language-speaking pupils']*'. He strongly critiqued the MoEC's failure to remove constraints, such as a very demanding curriculum, changing staff, no differentiation in terms of policies and funding according to each school's different needs, no information to teachers and parents, and insufficient time for the GAL sessions. Despite the MoEC's call for schools to develop their local intercultural education policies, action plans and practices, the absence of centrally-initiated '*corresponding [structural and cultural] changes*' and the focus of the MoEC's circulars regarding intercultural education on the '*management of time for other-language-speaking pupils and a lot of theory*' limited what was perceived as feasible and resulted in intercultural education being perceived as '*[a] struggle for each school*'.

This struggle seemed to be perceived by Antonis as becoming even harder due to the lack of support by most parents, for which he placed responsibility on the parents:

What support will you find, even if you try to offer in the school? They don't care if the children do their homework. This, in turn, affects other issues of discipline and paying attention to the lesson...we are in an area where there are many haunts, which particularly these parents prefer to coming to a school meeting.

His belief that parents did not care about their children's education seemed to be based on past negative experiences. For example, he mentioned the intense discussions he had had with Roma parents who saw no reason for girls to learn to read and write. These negative experiences with some parents and, potentially, his representing a middle-class institution (Ball, 2003; Reay, 2006) seemed to have contributed to his construction of working-class parents as a homogeneous culturally inferior group. Crozier and Davies (2007) note that '[s]eeing parents as a homogeneous group imposes normative values of the white middle-class and often male parent', inhibiting the realization of the potential contribution of working-class, majority and minority ethnic parents (p.296). Thus, the school rather than parents might have been 'hard to reach' by not being welcoming enough to enable these parents to overcome their concerns about their limited education, their level of competence in the host language and how they would be received (ibid.). Antonis' static, stereotypical and homogenizing view of working-class parents seemed to render the differences among these parents, such as their different ethnic, linguistic, religious and cultural backgrounds, invisible. Acknowledging these differences and reflecting on the extent to which the school culture and practices enabled all parents' participation in their children's education could possibly allow Antonis to identify and address institutional and cultural barriers for some parents, which, as mentioned earlier, seemed to go unnoticed.

On the other hand, Antonis portrayed himself and the teachers as agents, who '*are not here only to see the result, we create the result*'. He expressed his full trust in the staff, who '*put extreme effort and see the job of the teacher as a vocation*' and he emphasized that:

Our priority is the provision of education for all children...the goal is that the children of whatever origin leave [the school] with the necessary tools, so that they can move forward to the secondary school and to society...The goal is the children's future to the extent to which we can help them...Our aim is not to say that we do intercultural education to reduce what we offer or to lower our expectations of the children.

Having high expectations of all their pupils, including 'other-language-speaking' pupils, whom he described as '*our best pupils*', he distanced the school vision from approaches to intercultural education which lower the quality of the education provided. In fact, he seemed to adopt a sceptical stance towards intercultural education, which he described as a temporary policy that would soon be withdrawn, as the number of migrant pupils would decrease due to the economic crisis in Cyprus. This suggests the head teacher's understanding of cultural diversity as a feature of the migrants, who were seen as temporary inhabitants of Cyprus. So, when the migrants left Cyprus, it was assumed that cultural diversity would no longer be an issue and intercultural education would fade away. This narrow understanding of cultural diversity and intercultural education as an add-on to the existing reality which would soon disappear could relate to the intercultural education policy discourse, which mainly focused on Greek language support for 'other-language-speaking' pupils. Distancing the school vision from this narrow conception of intercultural education and stressing that the aim was all pupils' learning and the children's future suggests a justice- and equity-oriented vision.

Antonis' justice-oriented concerns were also reflected in his belief that home-school cooperation was key to achieving the best learning outcomes. He presented himself as the link between parents, pupils and the community and he referred to efforts to involve parents in the school '*to the degree they can*'. For instance, school events took place in the morning, so that non-Greek-Cypriot mothers who worked in the evenings could attend. He seemed to empathize with working-class mothers and the challenges they faced, saying that '*you can't have expectations of mothers who work until ten or eleven at night*'. But, he criticized working-class, Greek-Cypriot fathers for their absence from their children's education, which they left to the non-Cypriot mothers, who could hardly communicate with the

teachers. However, when asked on which occasions parents were invited to the school, the head teacher indicated that they were welcome to all school events and whenever the teachers invited them, mainly to inform them about their child's progress. This reflects parents' peripheral position in the school and confirms the head teacher's narrow understanding of working-class parents' potential contribution to the school.

Hence, there is some tension between, on the one hand, his understanding of the significance of home-school relations and of his key role in promoting parental involvement in the school and, on the other hand, his construction of working class parents, especially fathers, as indifferent and his placing the blame on them for their limited or no involvement in their children's education. There is also some conflict between, on the one hand, his construction of multiculturalism as a 'problem' and his feeling powerless to deal with this 'problem' and, on the other hand, his belief in 'other-language-speaking' pupils' ability to achieve and in his and the teachers' agency for change. These contradictions in his narrative seem to reflect the struggle that Antonis must have been experiencing, trying to balance the MoEC's conflicting demands and pressures and the diverse needs of the pupil population, feeling powerless and being uncertain about how to engage with cultural diversity without having been provided with professional support and the tools to enable him to redefine his role and practices.

Operating in this terrain of conflicting pressures and ideologies, Antonis stressed that *'[i]n this school you have much more responsibility to keep a balance...and to avoid highlighting differences'*. He underlined that it was their *'everyday effort not to have discrimination'*, which was pursued through the pupils' equal participation in the lesson and in school events. Antonis mentioned that only religious reasons might prevent a pupil's participation and that in all events, even in *'national celebrations, they all participate-each according to their capabilities'*. The assumption underlying Antonis' words seems to be that all pupils are given equal opportunities and any differences in participation are the result of the pupil's individual capabilities. Like many of the head teachers in Aveling's (2007) study, Antonis does not seem to engage with the idea 'that the

playing field is not a level one and that equal treatment does not guarantee equitable outcomes' (p. 79). The 'naïve egalitarianism' (Causey et al., 2000) reflected in Antonis' words did not seem to assist him in systematically addressing institutional and structural barriers to equality of outcome. Although some measures were taken to assist their disadvantaged pupils, as explained in the previous section, these did not seem to go beyond addressing their pupils' linguistic and cultural deficit. Hence, despite good intentions, such practices did not transform oppressive structures, by, for example, removing barriers to the inclusion of diverse knowledges and voices in the learning process and in school life. Consequently, they seemed to sustain, rather than dismantle, cultural hegemony and unequal power relations (Gorski, 2008).

As regards his leadership style, Antonis seems to exhibit a single leadership style that combined the transactional style with elements of the social justice model. Realizing the difficulties involved in leading a multicultural school, one of his main concerns was the smooth operation of the school and keeping problems out of the school, as manifested by his efforts to '*keep a balance*'. Similar views were expressed by most school leaders who held conservative understandings of multiculturalism and displayed a transactional leadership style in Zembylas and Iasonos' (2010) study. Unlike some of the head teachers in this group, however, he did not follow the Ministry's guidelines to the letter but made some adjustments to better cater for the needs of the pupils. This 'creative mediation' (Osborn et al., 2000) of the Ministry's guidelines may have been driven by the head teacher's commitment to his vision of providing quality education for all and his belief in the school's agency. Such beliefs were held by head teachers who employed a critical approach to multiculturalism and a critical/social justice leadership model in Zembylas and Iasonos' (2010) study. Nevertheless, Antonis' potential lack of awareness and realization of how the school as an institution may contribute to social injustice and power inequalities may have prevented him from transforming his understanding of equality from 'naïve egalitarianism' (Causey et al., 2000) to equity in outcomes and envisioning the school as an agent of change in the direction of social justice and equity. Moreover, he did not seem to have communicated his vision even to the teachers, as exhibited by Dina's assertion that

following the head teacher, her *‘priority is [the children’s] wellbeing and then, education’* and by the variety in teachers’ practices in relation to cultural diversity, reflecting different understandings of the purpose of education.

In fact, Antonis’ single leadership style, his sceptical stance towards intercultural education, and uncertainty and anxiety about dealing with diversity issues seemed to limit the space for staff members to collectively engage with the reforms at the school level and develop a shared understanding of intercultural education, a shared set of values, a shared vision and school policies. Although Antonis underlined the significance of collaboration among staff members, Georgia mentioned that, although their views were sought in the decision-making process, *‘in the end the decision may not-we simply say our opinion’*. Moreover, there seemed to be no space for the dissemination of knowledge among staff members and the creation of a professional learning community. Even though some teachers in the school had attended seminars on the newly introduced subject of Health Education, through which diversity issues were addressed, it depended on individual teachers’ initiative to ask and learn about things.

However, Antonis’ justice-oriented concerns and the fact that he did not see the school practices as being strictly structured by the Ministry’s guidelines provided individual teachers with some space to act as agents of change in their classrooms, if they wanted to. The teachers’ enactment of intercultural education depended mainly on the teachers’ beliefs about, and understandings of, intercultural education and cultural diversity, which are discussed in the next section.

5.5 Teachers’ Political, Historical and Sociocultural Narratives and Intercultural Education

Apparently influenced by the political, historical and sociocultural context in which they lived, worked and had been educated, most teachers’ accounts seem to reflect the conflicting ideologies of the long-established Hellenocentrism and the recently introduced interculturalism, which coexist in the national education

policy discourse. However, teachers' different locations in the hierarchy of power in the social and historical context of Cyprus seem to have shaped their life and professional experiences differently. In turn, these different experiences affected constructions of cultural diversity and intercultural education, as is explained below.

On the one hand, the teachers' beliefs about intercultural education seem to have been influenced by Cyprus' accession into the EU and the MoEC's promotion of intercultural education. Specifically, there was a consensus among the teachers regarding the relevance of intercultural education. Nevertheless, Dina was ambivalent about whether intercultural education was relevant for all schools or only for schools with 'other-language-speaking' pupils. This ambivalence could be attributed to the vagueness surrounding the meaning of intercultural education in the education policy discourse.

On the other hand, the unresolved conflict, the recent rapid and significant increase in the number of migrants on the island and the ensuing negative representations of migrants in Greek-Cypriot society (ECRI, 2011; Trimikliniotis & Demetriou, 2011) seem to have influenced some of the teachers' beliefs about cultural diversity in society. Specifically, two out of the three class teachers appear to construct migrants in relatively negative terms. Helen refused to answer when asked about her view regarding the arrival of many migrants to Cyprus in the last few years, suggesting perhaps a discontent with the situation or uncertainty of how to respond to the question and by extension, to this issue. Dina referred to the impact of migration on Cyprus, as follows:

Positive, namely the whole world has now become multinational...And it is negative that there might be some turbulence...or there are other-language-speaking people who don't get married to receive benefits as single parents, while the state deducts money from my salary for taxes, which others who don't offer anything to this place reap.

Like the Greek-Cypriot primary teachers in Papamichael's (2011) research, Dina employed the repertoires of inevitability and fear with reference to the migrants. She portrayed cultural diversity as an inevitable phenomenon of the modern world,

while, at the same time, employing the discourse of ‘us versus them’, depicting ‘us’ as the victims of ‘them’: the scroungers and instigators of turbulence. These negative assumptions about the migrants seem to contradict the value of respect for diversity underpinning intercultural education, the significance of which the teachers readily acknowledged. This suggests an internal conflict between the teachers’ personal and professional beliefs, which becomes even more apparent when considering these teachers’ beliefs about the Turks:

...having in mind what happened, I don't know whether we can live together. ...I don't like it [the possibility of coexisting], but... (Helen, 3rd gr.)

...last year until Christmas I experienced really intense emotions facing this view [the Turkish flags next to the school] every day...it hurt me a lot... I have this subconscious fear of a new invasion by the Turks... This is due to the ongoing stirring of the Cyprus Problem, which has no end and it is this cultivation that the Turks are, they only think about expansionist politics. It is what they have cultivated in us. (Dina, 1st gr.)

These teachers’ fear and intolerance and negative constructions of the Turks seem to have developed and to have been sustained through the signs of, and discourses about, the conflict in their everyday lives. Moreover, both teachers had a refugee parent. Hence, they had probably experienced more intensely the trauma of having lost their home, their land and their belongings within their family, compared to teachers, whose parents are not refugees. Furthermore, the institutional context in which they worked seemed to reinforce these negative emotions and essentialist, stereotypical understandings of the Turks:

The negative idea we have about the Turks and the Turkish-Cypriots is perpetuated and what worries me is that it is perpetuated even in the nursery school...[F]or example, there isn't adequate representation of Turkish literary writers in the texts we study...There is no right treatment of the history of Cyprus... a situation is perpetuated where they want the pupil to believe, for example, that the Turk is the enemy and bad. (Georgia, 6th gr.)

Unlike her colleagues’ reproduction of the dominant ‘othering’ discourse about the Turks and representation of the ethnic Self as the victim of the Other’s – both the primary Other’s and the new Other’s, the migrants’ - injustice, Georgia

challenged the ‘othering’ discourse and structures in the Greek-Cypriot education system and exhibited an understanding of the ways in which power and privilege operate. Georgia’s political literacy and critical consciousness seemed to have developed through her critical engagement with her own experiences of discrimination as a Maronite pupil, teacher and citizen in Greek-Cypriot society:

[I]n my secondary school, you had to get 20 in Religious Education, in order to get a good final grade. To get 20 in Religious Education, you had to answer questions, like ‘compare the icons of the Western Church to icons of the Eastern Church’, and you, as a Catholic, had to write that those of the Eastern Church are better. And I wrote it, but I wrote in a parenthesis underneath, ‘I don’t believe these, I just write them to get 20’.

I avoid teaching Religious Education, even though I had 10 [Excellent] in the Teaching of Religious Education. Because I don’t want them to say, ‘Ah, she’s a Maronite and she made this mistake ...there are still some stereotypes, which you can’t easily change.

Georgia’s membership of a historically oppressed indigenous minority group, the Maronites, and, thus, her status of an insider and, at the same time, outsider in Greek-Cypriot society seemed to have enabled her to realize from a very young age the privilege of the dominant culture, the oppression experienced by other cultures and the need to pretend to conform, so as to achieve in the education system. Moreover, her postgraduate studies, which dealt with diversity issues, seemed to have enabled her theoretically informed engagement with power issues and potentially, with her experiences. Unlike her dominant group colleagues, who had not had similar experiences, Georgia exhibited a sensitivity to, and empathy for, the Other, even in the case of the ‘Turks’. Her community’s narratives about their ‘*cooperation with the Turkish-Cypriots*’ seemed to have contributed to her positive stance towards the ‘Turks’, which was manifested through her efforts to promote their school’s collaboration with a school in Turkey through an Erasmus programme, her challenging the negative stereotypes about the Turks in her class and her persistent efforts to include Ahmet, the new Turkish-Cypriot Roma pupil in her class. Georgia’s political literacy and heightened critical consciousness were evident in her committed efforts to address injustice through her personal and professional life. This commitment was illustrated by her active participation in an NGO for the preservation of her ethnic community’s language and by her

efforts to challenge oppressive hegemonic discourses and structures in her classroom and at the school level. The aforementioned differences in these teachers' understandings of, and beliefs about, cultural diversity and their level of political literacy shaped by their life and professional experiences affected their constructions of intercultural education.

Teachers' conceptualisations of intercultural education varied and most teachers made hardly any reference to issues of power and justice. One of the most common understandings of intercultural education, included in almost all teachers' , was that of an add-on to the existing curriculum, aiming at '*giving all children the opportunity to present their culture*' (Dina). However, without being part of a broader transformative vision, approaches that focus on the children's familiarization with other cultures and celebrating difference tend to leave unequal power relations and institutional barriers to participation and learning unchallenged (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997; May & Sleeter, 2010). Another way intercultural education was understood was as culturally responsive teaching:

Intercultural education means teaching according to the experiences and level of each child and when the children come from different backgrounds, take into account each individual you have in your class-their language, their different origin, their different level-make them feel good and important in school so that they can meet the targets set by the Ministry of Education and the school. (Georgia, 6th gr.)

Taking into account the pupils' cultural and linguistic capitals and adjusting teaching practices to respond to their cognitive, emotional, social and cultural needs reflects Helen's understanding of intercultural education, too. Although this conception of intercultural education takes into account children's different backgrounds, its scope seems to be restricted by focusing solely on helping the pupils '*meet the targets set by the Ministry of Education and the school*' rather than helping them '*develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order*' (Ladson-Billings, 1995). The only conception that seemed to touch upon justice and power issues is the following one:

All to be equal within a mass, in other words, not to be distinguished either on the basis of the language they speak, and I respect each language... We want it to exist and we must reinforce the children... Not only at the language level – it is also how you accept the children in school. We must consider that all our schools are schools where there are children from various areas. (Despina, GAL teacher)

Despina not only underlined the significance of recognizing, affirming and including the Other as Other but also criticized the celebration of diversity, stating that: *‘having intercultural events, you may fall in the trap, instead of integrating these children, of ultimately marginalizing them, showing that they are something different.’* What may have contributed to this difference between Despina’s and the rest of the teachers’ conceptions of intercultural education is that Despina, as the main teacher of Greek to ‘other-language-speaking’ pupils in this school, and the head teacher had attended a conference on intercultural education and they were the ones who were informed about the MoEC’s circulars on intercultural education.

However, in most cases, there was a discrepancy between the teachers’ conceptions of intercultural education and their observed and reported practices. For example, although Dina referred to giving pupils opportunities to manifest their cultures, in practice *‘since you have seven to eight cultures and languages in the class and you have to adjust them to one, the Greek one, it is very difficult to have time left for anything else’*. Dina rarely asked pupils to say a word in their language or provided pupils with some basic information about a country mentioned in their book, while she simplified the syllabus to help her pupils comprehend and participate. A similar approach was taken by Helen. Taking for granted her pupils’ *‘very limited experiences... and knowledge’*, Despina simplified the teaching content, too, and used a lot of visual aids in her lessons. However, this simplification sometimes resulted in her pupils’ disengagement, as the following extract from my fieldnotes from a lesson observation shows:

D: Butterfly. Does it end in y?

A: No reply.

D: Butterflyyyyyyy. Does it end in y? Butterflyyyyyyy.

The teacher repeated various words several times, asking whether they end in y. Ahmet either remained silent or said: 'Yes, no.' He gets a bit angry, possibly because the teacher repeats the words so many times. When they turn the page, his eyes gleamed with excitement.

D: But these are difficult.

A: I like them.

D: Since you like them, let's do them.

Construing Ahmet's (Turkish-Cypriot Roma, 6th gr.) silence possibly as lack of understanding, Despina repeated the same questions again and again, without understanding that the pupil had probably lost interest and was demotivated by this underestimation of his capacities. Such practices reflect deficit views of minority ethnic children and the devaluation and marginalization of their diverse capitals. These contradictions between these teachers' conceptions of intercultural education and their practices are indicative of the internal conflict between these dominant group teachers' deeply internalized beliefs about the 'us versus them' division and the rhetoric of intercultural education, which is something relatively new and the teachers are still trying to understand, accept and incorporate into their existing belief system.

The historical construction of themselves as the victims of oppression and injustice, evidenced in Helen's and Dina's narratives, was a potent voice which appeared to hinder these dominant group teachers from realizing the privilege they hold as members of the dominant group and consequently, from becoming conscious of the ways in which their teaching practices, interactions with their pupils or institutionalized processes and practices can discriminate against, and exclude, minority ethnic pupils. This is evident, for example, in these teachers' belief that there is no racism in the school, and, therefore, no school policies and practices to address racism and discrimination were needed. It was also evident in their everyday practices and interactions with their pupils, which, being underpinned by unquestioned negative assumptions about certain groups that are stigmatized in Greek-Cypriot society, resulted in discriminating against and further disadvantaging their pupils who were members of these groups, such as

the Pontian Greeks and the Turkish-Cypriot Roma. For example, Dina placed responsibility for Thanos', a Pontian Greek pupil's, low participation and misbehavior on Thanos and his family: *'He doesn't care to learn... The family hasn't set learning as a target in life'*. While Dina changed all pupils' seats twice during my fieldwork, Thanos always remained sitting alone in the back row. Dina justified this decision by saying: *'Because Thanos did not show any improvement in terms of self-control, he couldn't sit with another child'*. She did not seem, however, to realize that Thanos' marginalization, which was effected not only by his sitting on his own but also by the teacher's almost constant reprimand for his behavior, may have reinforced his misbehavior. Pupils' misbehavior may be interpreted as a form of resistance to teacher control or a way for pupils "to distance themselves from uncaring and disrespectful teachers" (Milner, 2006, p. 503). Dina's apparently negative attitude towards Thanos may have resulted from her negative stereotypes of Pontian Greek children, whom she described as *'extremely stubborn'* and as not able to learn Greek as easily as the Romanians and the Bulgarians. She described her goal as being *'to fight their stubbornness'*. These negative stereotypes seem to underpin her approach to Thanos, which seems to have further marginalized him rather than included him. The examples of Despina's interaction with Ahmet and Dina's approach to Thanos illustrate how dominant group teachers' limited understanding of discrimination and unchallenged deficit views of diversity constrained their capacity to identify and address discrimination and resulted in their reproduction of othering discourses and practices that further disadvantaged their multiply disadvantaged working-class minority ethnic pupils.

Contrary to her colleagues, Georgia's heightened political literacy and critical consciousness assisted her in making conscious and systematic efforts to foster respect for, and inclusion of, all pupils in her class and to address the social exclusion that some of her pupils experienced – *'[e]specially the low performing pupils. They don't accept them, even worse if they are other-language-speaking, too'*. For example, acting as a role model, she always included Ahmet in the lesson, despite his initial resistance. Acknowledging her pupils' exclusion of Ahmet, she gradually involved his classmates in helping him participate, despite the

difficulties he had due to his limited Greek language competence. She made, thus, ongoing efforts to build an inclusive culture in her class. Moreover, she showed no tolerance of pupils' discriminatory attitudes and she tried to raise her pupils' awareness of how power operates and help them develop critical thinking and deconstruct prevailing stereotypes. Georgia also made efforts to transform school practices with a view to creating an inclusive school culture and eliminating institutional discrimination, as explained in 5.3. This reflects her understanding of intercultural education as a philosophy of education that permeates all school policies, processes and practices.

Consequently, the dominant group teachers appeared to experience cognitive dissonance, oscillating between the Europeanised rhetoric of intercultural education employed by the MoEC and the historically established and politically, socio-culturally and institutionally sustained constructions of the Other as a threat - material or symbolic - and of 'us' as the victims of social injustice and human rights violation. Despite their individual efforts to engage with intercultural education, their essentialist understandings of identity, their limited understanding of discrimination and their deeply ingrained beliefs about the Other as shaped by their political, historical and sociocultural context seemed to constrain their agency for change. On the contrary, the Maronite teacher's, Georgia's, heightened political literacy and critical consciousness developed through her critical engagement with her life and professional experiences of discrimination appeared to have enabled her to promote a border pedagogy in her class and assist her minority ethnic pupils in challenging, deconstructing and crossing borders.

The next section explores and discusses the teachers' beliefs about their agency in taking intercultural education forward.

5.6 Teacher Agency and Intercultural Education

All the teachers and the head teacher in St Lazarus school understood that the absence of monitoring and accountability measures regarding the implementation

of intercultural education entailed that its enactment *'depend[ed] on the teachers' and the head teacher's good faith'* (Antonis). As the head teacher underlined, *'they [the teachers] have to take control of things and escape from the [role of the] bureaucratic teacher'*. However, the teachers perceived their agency for change to be constrained by several factors.

Echoing the head teacher, the most commonly cited factor was the absence of centralized support for taking intercultural education forward. The teachers underlined the absence of a coherent and clear philosophy of education underpinning the reforms introduced, which resulted in their *'confusion'* (Georgia) about what they were expected to do. On the one hand, the new curriculum remained *'Hellenocentric'* (Georgia & Despina). Addressing diversity issues mainly through Health Education, while overall retaining its ethnocentric and monocultural character, the new curriculum was understood as assigning a marginal position to cultural diversity. Moreover, being very *'demanding'* (Dina & Helen), the new curriculum was understood as a barrier to the provision of equal opportunities to all pupils to participate and achieve:

Equal opportunities are not provided because of workload, the amount of the material to be covered, because of the number of the pupils...It renders us unable to provide equal opportunities to everyone. While a weak pupil would need double the time to consolidate something, there is no such possibility. (Dina, 1st gr.)

Dina acknowledged that some of her 1st grade pupils already *'ha[d] difficulties and fe[lt] insecurities and school failure'* due to their low level of Greek language competence or lack of home support, but she felt that the overloaded and demanding curriculum left her no time to meet her pupils' individual needs. On the other hand, the teachers were invited to use their *'pedagogical autonomy for differentiated teaching and teaching that results in learning for all pupils'* (MoEC, 2010, p. 15) and promote intercultural education, without having been equipped with the tools to engage with the redefinition of their role and practices in the policy discourse. The absence of professional support and of guidelines about *'the main goals, like what diversity means, how we should deal with it, what should be tolerated and what not'* (Dina) and how intercultural education can be put into

practice left teachers feeling unsupported and uncertain about how to deal with the diversity in their classes. Moreover, the Greek language support system for ‘other-language-speaking’ pupils was described as not being intensive and systematic and, thus, as not providing these children with adequate support to fully participate in the mainstream classes. Without taking into account the reality in schools, like St Lazarus, which other-language-speaking pupils join and leave throughout the school year, the MoEC allocated a number of hours for GAL sessions to each school based on data requested a year earlier. This resulted in the school being forced to reduce the time provided to some pupils to meet the needs of newcomers. Moreover, the time for GAL sessions was described as insufficient and the GAL teachers had received little, if any, education about how to teach Greek to speakers of other languages. Expressing her lack of confidence in teaching Greek as an additional language, Despina underlined: *‘It is important to be told by people who have experience ...how we can help them [other-language-speaking pupils]’*. Furthermore, Despina and the head teacher criticized the fact that these children are removed from the mainstream class to attend the GAL sessions. Nevertheless, the head teacher and most teachers perceived the absence of centralized support as severely constraining their capacity to effect equity-oriented changes to their practices.

Besides the absence of centralized support for intercultural education, some of the teachers referred to the absence of support at the school level, too:

How flexible you can be depends on the school you are in, the head teacher you have, the inspector you have and the teacher’s dynamism to be able to go against the status quo. (Dina)

Perceiving the locus of control as being internal and external at the same time, most teachers felt that they were not in a position of power to effect change on their own. Lack of support for transformative action by the head teacher, as reflected by the resistance to Georgia’s suggestions for alternative courses of action, and potentially by the inspector, did not seem to allow the space for local capacity building for equity-oriented reform. The absence of opportunities at the school for the collective development of a shared school vision and shared core

values and of a shared understanding of intercultural education and strategies of how to implement it seemed to undermine teachers' agency. The absence of a collaborative network in the school and of collective efforts for local capacity building for intercultural education seemed to intensify the feelings of isolation and lack of support expressed by both the head teacher and the teachers, who were left alone to grapple with the conflicting discourses and ideologies and the ambiguity surrounding intercultural education in the policy discourse. As Dina underlined: *'We are heading and acting on our own.'* Feeling isolated and unsupported and being constrained by their essentialist understandings of identity and culture, their deeply ingrained negative beliefs about the primary Other, narrow understandings of the purpose of education and limited understandings of discrimination, most dominant group teachers appeared to be reluctant to assume the role of change agent and to feel powerless to effect changes to their practices:

Our work is done in exactly the same way...it [intercultural education] should not depend on each teacher's initiative and imagination. (Dina, 1st gr.)

I do whatever I can...I try to simplify some things or if I know that a child has some experiences because of their culture or their religion, I may ask them to tell us their experiences, but I won't do anything else. (Helen, 3rd gr)

Disrupting established practices and acting as 'autonomous professional pedagogues' (Kontovourki, Theodorou & Philippou, 2015) did not appear to be an option for these teachers. Instead, they resorted to the incorporation of a few changes to their existing practices, leaving, thus, their deeply rooted beliefs about the Other unchallenged.

On the other hand, Georgia's example illustrates the power of beliefs and values which can make the enactment of individual agency for change possible, despite the multiple external constraints. Her beliefs about cultural diversity, her deep understanding of power and social justice issues, the resilience she had developed by dealing with discrimination in her everyday life, and her commitment to instilling the values of respect for diversity and social justice to her pupils seem to have contributed significantly to her determination to transcend the cultural,

structural and material constraints in the here-and-now and exercise her agency for the ‘innovative mediation’ (Pollard et al., 2001) of the reforms. In other words, she took control of the reforms and translated them into practice in line with her values, taking transformative, equity- and justice-oriented action both in her classroom and at the school level.

The next section explores the ways in which these teachers’ pupils understood, experienced and responded to cultural diversity and to their teachers’ different approaches to cultural diversity.

5.7 Children’s Understandings, Experiences of, and Responses to Cultural Diversity

Children’s understandings of cultural diversity varied across grades. Specifically, the discussion about the children’s understandings of cultural diversity at the beginning of the whole-class research activities revealed the 1st grade pupils’ narrow understanding of cultural diversity, which was restricted to visible differences, such as age, gender and skin colour. On the other hand, pupils in the 3rd and 6th grades exhibited a wider understanding of cultural diversity, encompassing skin colour, nationality, religion, language, habits and the way people dress. This difference could be attributed to the younger pupils’ more limited experiences of diversity. However, like in the higher grades, there were migrant pupils and a Muslim pupil in this class. It could also be suggested that Dina’s, the 1st grade teacher’s, conscious efforts for ‘*difference not to become visible in class*’ could have contributed to the fact that her pupils did not know even where their classmates were from and had to ask each other to complete their friends’ nationalities in the ‘My Friends and I’ handout.

Nevertheless, the photo elicitation activity and the role plays revealed that many of the majority and minority ethnic pupils across grades acknowledged the existence of racism among children. Many pupils suggested that a newly-arrived migrant or refugee child, like the Chinese boy and the Syrian girl depicted on the

photos I showed to them (see Appendix L), would probably experience ‘loneliness’ and ‘teasing’ in the Greek-Cypriot school and would face difficulties due to their different customs and limited or no Greek language competence. In the role plays, children tended to portray cultural difference as a problem, as deficient and as a barrier to social inclusion and academic achievement. For instance, the 3rd grade pupils portrayed the newly arrived Chinese or Syrian refugee pupil either as somebody they made fun of or as silly, making a lot of mistakes, while their classmates tried to teach them the language. In the 6th grade, two out of the three role plays depicted scenes of racist bullying, whereby the children made fun of the newly arrived migrant or refugee pupil’s ethnicity and religion. For example, in the boys’ role play, *‘Lee’s classmates say while laughing: “Ah, look at the Chinese, the Buddhist!” They pushed him and, in the end,, they punched him.’* When asked to explain the rationale behind their choice of scenario, some of the 6th grade pupils’ replies indicated a growing, sophisticated understanding of power and discrimination, as illustrated by the following reply provided by a Bulgarian pupil: *‘people of European origin usually believe that those of Asian origin are inferior. Because there are areas where there is more poverty, they regard them inferior to them.’* Most 6th grade pupils’ heightened awareness of unequal power relations and discrimination, which was manifest both during the activities and during the lesson observations in this class, could be attributed to Georgia’s constant efforts to raise the children’s awareness of power and social justice issues. The fact that Georgia had provided them with the tools to critically reflect on the status quo and created a safe space in their classroom to discuss such issues seemed to have played a catalytic role in these pupils’ awareness and articulation of these issues. However, the fact that children across grades tended to justify their choices of the role play scenario, by saying that they showed what *‘children’* or *‘most Cypriots’* did, made it difficult to understand whether these role plays reflected simply the pupils’ awareness of the existence of racism among children or their own responses to cultural diversity, too.

Focusing on everyday interactions among children and between children and their teachers, lesson and break observations revealed the reproduction of othering discourses and practices by some of the majority and minority ethnic children

across the three grades. Such discourses and practices targeted pupils who belonged to specific groups, as suggested by Markos (6th gr., GC (Greek-Cypriot)) and was confirmed by my observations:

Markos: If their country, they haven't done something bad to us or we like their country or their religion or something else, we welcome them nicely, with kindness, we treat them like our people with the same religion, as if they were from our country. But when they come from another country, which we hate, we don't welcome them nicely.

I: Are there good and bad countries? Are there good and bad religions?

Andreas: If they have done something bad to our country.

Not 'welcoming them nicely' was understood as justified if the Other had had a negative impact on Cyprus historically. The children's attitudes towards cultural diversity seemed, thus, to highly depend on the minority ethnic child's ethnic, religious and cultural identity and whether this was constructed as the enemy or as a threat to the Greek-Cypriot society. The observations revealed that the participant children's discriminatory discourses and actions mainly targeted the Turkish Cypriot Roma and some Pontian Greek pupils who did not comply with what was considered to be the norm in this context. For instance, in the 1st grade, Thanos, the Pontian Greek pupil who seemed to exhibit the 'stubbornness' of the Pontian Greeks that their teacher, Dina, aimed to 'fight', seemed to experience marginalization not only in class, where he always sat alone, but also in the yard. He was not mentioned by any of his classmates as one of their best friends in the 'My Friends and I' handout and he was most of the time on his own during breaks. In the 3rd grade, Akim's, the new Turkish-Cypriot Roma pupil's, daily experiences in school were characterized by marginalization, bullying and insults. Nobody sat next to him in class and whenever the teacher, Helen, asked the pupils to work in groups during the lesson observations, his experiences seemed to further reinforce his exclusion and dehumanization by his peers. For instance, during a lesson observation, the teacher asked Maria and Panagiotis, two high-performing Greek-Cypriot pupils, to work with Akim to prepare a poster. Not only did they not cooperate with him; whispered to each other's ear, so that he could not hear them; and did not let him see what they were doing, but they also prepared a poster with

racist implications. The poster advertised a ham, which they called ‘Panama’ from the initials of the two pupils’ names and they explained to me and the teacher that the ham was Akim, whom they cut. Their teacher pretended not to have heard it and moved away. The teacher’s inaction and tolerance of racism in her class allowed such incidents to be part of Akim’s everyday reality in school.

However, for Ahmet, Akim’s brother in the 6th grade, everyday experiences in his class were quite different. My fieldwork recorded the gradual transformation of Ahmet’s classmates’ initial negative attitudes towards him into qualified acceptance and inclusion. As one of his classmates mentioned during the activities, *‘When Ahmet came, we didn’t know, we made fun of him a bit, but now...’* Although it could be suggested that this change took place as a result of the pupils’ familiarization with Ahmet and vice versa, evidence suggests that Ahmet’s ethnic background significantly affected his relationships with his classmates. Even after he had been accepted and included in the boys’ group, he was still not fully accepted by all his peers. For example, some girls complained to me that they did not want to hold his hand in the end-of-year celebration, *‘because he is dirty’*. Nevertheless, there was a remarkable change in the children’s attitude towards him throughout my fieldwork, which his teacher, Georgia, attributed to Ahmet’s successful participation in the end-of-year celebration and to the fact that *‘they saw that Ahmet is not someone bad...so they had no reason to be afraid of him.’* However, Georgia’s persistent efforts to include Ahmet, despite his initial stance of silence and withdrawal, and to build an inclusive and collaborative culture in this class seemed to have played a significant role in Ahmet’s inclusion, too.

Depending on the extent to which the teacher recognized, affirmed and valued cultural diversity in class, the teacher also seemed to enable or constrain their minority ethnic pupils’ agency to negotiate their cultural positioning in school and seemed to affect whether the children felt comfortable about their difference. Specifically, while in Dina’s and Helen’s classes, Turkish-speaking and / or Muslim pupils used their agency to dissociate themselves from othered axes of their identities, in Georgia’s class, most children seemed to feel confident about their difference. For instance, Pontian Greek children in Dina’s and Helen’s

classes tended to self-identify as Cypriots. On the contrary, in the 6th grade, Sofia, a Pontian Greek pupil, resented her being seen as Greek-Cypriot, during one of the lesson observations:

Sofia: I don't like being called a Cypriot.

Georgia: Why have you heard anything negative being said about the Cypriots?

S: I am not Cypriot. I am Pontian. It is not nice being told that you are from one race, while you are from another.

This confidence in her ethnic and cultural identity reflected her teacher's confidence in her own cultural identity, which she constantly conveyed to her pupils. Similarly, while the different religious background of Muslim pupils was not recognized in the 1st and 3rd grade and the Muslim children fully participated in the Orthodox Christian morning prayer to fit in, Georgia explicitly acknowledged the religious diversity in her class and invited her religiously diverse pupils to silently say any prayer they wanted to during the morning prayer.

Actively legitimizing, valuing and respecting cultural diversity and proving through her own example that it did not need to be experienced as a problem or a barrier to success, Georgia provided her minority ethnic pupils with the space to negotiate their positioning and decide which capital to draw on. At least some of her pupils seemed to build bridges between their home cultures and the dominant culture, as suggested by the fact that some used hyphenated ethnic identities to describe their or their friend's ethnic background in the 'My Friends and I' handout'. Georgia's efforts to promote a border pedagogy in her class seemed to have enabled at least some of her pupils to deconstruct prevailing stereotypes, reconstruct stigmatized ethnic identities, such as the Pontian Greeks and the Turkish-Cypriot Roma, who tend to be portrayed as intellectually and culturally inferior in Greek-Cypriot society (Theodorou & Symeou, 2013), and construct borderlands. Georgia's approach to cultural diversity seemed to have a positive impact on her minority ethnic pupils' self-concept and self-worth. This was illustrated even in the case of Ahmet. Although Ahmet, like Akim, refused to talk about his parents' ethnic background during the first round of activities and he was

silent in class, as time went by and he acclimatized himself to his new inclusive class environment, Ahmet opened up and his self-confidence increased both in class as well as in his interactions with his classmates. In class, he started participating to some extent with the help of his teacher and his classmates, while during breaks he even joined the other boys in teasing the girls. The inclusive and collaborative ethos Georgia tried to build in her class, her efforts to assist her pupils in developing a critical consciousness and Ahmet's gradual acceptance by his peers seem to have had a positive impact on his self-esteem.

In the other two classes, the misrecognition of cultural diversity seemed to leave limited scope for children to choose which capitals to mobilise. Deviation from the middle-class, Orthodox Christian, Greek-Cypriot culture was constructed as a problem, as a threat or as abnormal in those classes, as illustrated by Dina's marginalization of Thanos due to his non-compliance with the teacher's normative expectations, by the reproduction of institutionalized discourses about the Turks portrayed as the enemy in Dina's class, by Helen's inaction and tolerance of Akim's marginalization and his peers' racist attitudes towards him, and by her explicit invalidation of cultural difference, as illustrated below:

Helen: *What does a healthy breakfast consist of?*
Eleana (Pontian Greek): *A salad.*

H (baffled): *A salad for breakfast?*

E: *My mum and grandma eat salad for breakfast.*

H: *For breakfast?*

Eleana finally denied it.

H (asking the whole class): *Does anyone eat salad for breakfast? I don't and it doesn't seem to be very suitable for breakfast.*

The above excerpt from my field notes taken during the observation of a Heath Education lesson shows that the teacher did not take into account the different cultural backgrounds of her pupils, which might entail different dietary habits. Difference from the 'norm' is presented as abnormal and eventually, the pupil who suggested salad for breakfast had to deny that her family had this habit, so as not

to appear abnormal. By invalidating these diverse pupils' different dietary habits and by extension, their diverse experiences and cultures, the teacher did not seem to help them develop a positive self-concept. In the 'My Friends and I' handout, most children in this class mentioned that their best friends / classmates were from Cyprus, even if one of their parents or both were not and some, especially Pontian Greek children, self-identified as Cypriots. Akim only revealed his parents' ethnicity when I affirmed and praised one of his Pontian Greek classmates, who spoke several languages including Turkish. Fear of rejection, exclusion or ridicule seemed to have contributed to these children's efforts to hide or minimize their difference, often claiming the dominant Greek-Cypriot identity.

Consequently, contrary to the head teacher's and most participant teachers' assertion that there was no racism in this school, the cases of Thanos, Akim and Ahmet illustrate the existence of mainly latent and, to a lesser extent, explicit racism within the walls of this school. Othering discourses and actions were recorded in all classes and were found to target mainly members of stigmatized groups in Greek-Cypriot society, such as the Pontian Greek and Turkish-Cypriot Roma pupils. However, whether the teacher reproduced or challenged hegemonic oppressive discourses and structures through their words and actions or inaction seemed to affect how pupils, understood and experienced their cultural difference. This is also expected to have had an impact on these pupils' achievement, as the way pupils are positioned through teacher-pupil interactions expands or restricts the opportunities they have to invest their identities in the learning process (Cummins, 2009) and may affect the pupils' own expectations, behaviour and performance (Llurda & Lasagabaster, 2010).

5.8 Conclusion

In St Lazarus school, there was no shared school vision, values and school policies guiding teachers' practices and thus, no uniform ethos. The rigid hierarchical culture and the head teacher's uncertainty and anxiety about how to deal with the diversity in the pupil population without centralized support and parental

involvement resulted in the marginalization of intercultural education in the school agenda. The absence of space at the school level for staff members to collectively engage with the reforms and develop a shared understanding of the ambiguous concept of intercultural education and of how to take it forward seemed to have resulted in most staff members', including the head teacher's, sense of isolation and powerlessness to effect substantial, equity-oriented changes to their practices at a school and classroom level. Although some measures were taken in response to their 'other-language-speaking' pupils, such as the provision of GAL sessions to small groups of children for more targeted support or the organization of one-off events that celebrated cultural diversity, such measures seemed to sustain and reinforce the misrecognition and marginalization of diverse knowledges and experiences.

At the classroom level, despite the teachers' consensus about the relevance of intercultural education, constructions of cultural diversity and intercultural education were found to vary and to be based on each teacher's beliefs and values regarding cultural diversity. These beliefs and values appeared to have been shaped by their personal and professional histories and the various discourses about cultural diversity available to them through their families, communities, the institutional context and the wider political, historical and sociocultural context of Cyprus. Georgia's embodiment of diversity and experiences of discrimination in her personal and professional life, her exposure to alternative discourses about the Turkish-Cypriots through her community, the Maronite community, and her postgraduate studies seemed to all have contributed to her heightened political literacy and critical consciousness. Her resilience and commitment to social justice and equity in her personal and professional life enabled her to transcend the cultural, structural and material constraints in the here and now and make consistent efforts to promote an inclusive culture and a border pedagogy in her classroom. Lacking similar experiences, exhibiting essentialist understandings of identity and a limited understanding of power and discrimination sustained by the institutionalized othering discourses and practices that reproduced the demonization of the 'Turks' and the inferiorization and marginalization of diverse knowledges and experiences, dominant group teachers restricted themselves to the

incorporation of a few changes to their existing practices, such as the simplification of the teaching material and occasionally asking some pupils to share a word in their home language or their experiences. This superficial engagement with intercultural education indicates that these teachers are still at an early stage of transition, where they seem to be trying to reconcile the new – intercultural education – with their historically established beliefs about the Other. This superficial engagement with intercultural education seems to provide a way to address the diversity in their class without having to challenge these deeply rooted beliefs.

The teachers' different approaches to cultural diversity and intercultural education in their classes carried implications for their pupils' understandings and experiences of and responses to cultural diversity. Specifically, Dina's and Helen's practices seemed to provide space for the development and expression of racial prejudice, by constructing diversity as abnormal and problematic through their interactions with the children and by not acknowledging and addressing racism in their classes. The marginalization and devaluation of the Pontian Greeks and the Turkish Cypriot Roma in Greek-Cypriot society (ECRI, 2006) and the stigmatization of elements associated with 'Turkishness', such as the Muslim identity, were reproduced, consciously or unconsciously, in these classrooms and seemed to leave no choice for children who were members of these groups, such as Thanos and Akim, but to hide or minimize their difference to fit in. On the contrary, many of Georgia's pupils exhibited a growing understanding of discrimination, injustice and unequal power relations in society; articulated relevant issues and appeared to challenge dominant oppressive discourses and practices, as illustrated by their gradual acceptance of Ahmet and the confidence in their difference that many of her pupils exhibited or gradually developed, even if they were Pontian Greek or Turkish Cypriot Roma. However, the qualified acceptance of Ahmet may not extend to other 'Turks' because '*they have done something bad to our country*' (Markos, 6th gr., GC). Despite Georgia's efforts to help them deconstruct hegemonic discourses about cultural diversity, including the Turks, an individual teacher's efforts do not seem to suffice for the transformation of already deeply ingrained beliefs about the primary Other, which

are reinforced through the signs of the ongoing conflict in their everyday lives and institutionalized negative representations of the Turks.

Georgia made efforts to change the cultural and structural dimensions of the school, as well. However, her efforts had been met with resistance so far. Equity-oriented reform seems to require first and foremost the head teacher's belief in and commitment to this goal, which Antonis seemed to lack. Without having been equipped with the tools for such a reform and for the redefinition of his style of leadership from transactional to transformational (Blair, 2002) or social justice leadership (Theoharis, 2007), such an endeavour appeared to be perceived as too risky.

CHAPTER 6: CONSTRUCTIONS OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION IN THE ZEP SCHOOL

This chapter explores the ways in which intercultural education and cultural diversity were constructed in the ZEP school: a school with mainly migrant pupils in a low SES area. The presentation and critical discussion of the data is structured around the key themes that emerged:

- School ethos and intercultural education
- School leadership and intercultural education
- Teachers' political, historical and sociocultural narratives and intercultural education
- Teacher agency and intercultural education
- Children's understandings, experiences of, and responses to cultural diversity

The chapter begins by delineating the school context and introducing the research participants, before turning to the presentation and discussion of the findings.

6.1 School Context

The ZEP school is situated in an area, which could be described as a multicultural mosaic. An old Turkish mosque and an old Greek Orthodox church near the school are reminiscent of the fact that Cyprus has historically been an amalgam of different cultures and religions. This mosaic has been enriched with the diverse ethnicities, religions, languages and cultures of the inhabitants in this area, who, at the time of my research, were mainly working-class migrants.

The vast majority of the pupil population in the ZEP school were 1st or 2nd generation migrants, while only three out of 81 pupils were Greek-Cypriot. A few children were from mixed marriages of a Greek-Cypriot with a non-Greek-Cypriot. According to data provided by the head teacher, most migrant parents were from Bulgaria, Romania and the former Soviet Union and fewer from Africa and Asia. Their socioeconomic status was described as ranging from '*low to the poverty line*'. Most pupils were Christian, but there were also a few Muslim children and children of other religious backgrounds. All pupils could speak Greek; yet, their level of competence varied, as some had been born in Cyprus, others had been living in Cyprus for a few years, while others had recently arrived.

Unlike the diversity in the pupil population, all twelve staff members were Greek-Cypriot but one, who was a Greek married to a Greek-Cypriot. They were all Orthodox Christian and four out of the twelve were male.

Being part of a ZEP (Zone of Educational Priority), the goals of this school were to minimize early school dropout, school failure and delinquency; promote social cohesion; and prevent social marginalization and exclusion (MoEC, 2014). The approach each ZEP school takes to achieve the aforementioned goals is determined at the school level. The support measures provided by the Ministry include: extra funding for projects in the morning school and for free afternoon and evening classes; a smaller number of pupils in the first two grades, namely 20 instead of 25; free breakfast; extra time for Greek language support; cooperation with Centres for Information and Psycho-social Support of Pupils; and a free summer school (for more information about ZEP schools, see 1.4).

Compared to the other two schools, the ZEP school did not look child friendly; poor lighting, dark flooring and damaged walls all gave the impression of a repurposed building. The setting was far from welcoming or attractive with small recreational spaces, desks that were too small for older pupils and some dying plants. This impression was confirmed by the pupils' responses about what they would change in their schools in the 'My Friends and I' handout. Some suggested they would make the yard more attractive, by '*put[ting] trees*' and '*put[ting]*

games for all the children to play’, while others referred to making the building more appealing, by *‘paint[ing] the walls ...a brighter colour’* and *‘mak[ing] the classroom nice’*. During the three months of my fieldwork, there were hardly any changes to the school setting. This could be attributed partly to the decrease in the funding the school received from the Ministry due to the economic crisis. Moreover, other priorities, such as making sure that the children *‘come to school, have the essentials, have food’* (Stella, 3rd gr.), on top of these teachers’ concerns about how to respond to the high degree of diversity in their classes may have left them with little or no time and energy to change, or even notice, the school decoration and facilities.

6.2 Research Participants

The following table presents the adult participants:

Pseudonym	Position
Panagiotis (GC)	Head teacher
Stella (GC)	3 rd grade teacher (8-year-olds)
Lambros (Greek)	4 th grade teacher (9-year-olds)
Dimitris (GC)	5 th grade teacher (10-year-olds) and GAL teacher in the upper grades (4th-6th) (GAL: Greek as an Additional Language)
Maria (GC)	GAL teacher in the early grades (1st-3rd)

The head teacher had 26 years of teaching experience and had been in charge of this school for three years. The teachers’ overall teaching experience ranged from

8 to 13 years and in this school from 1 to 6 years. All the teachers were in their 30s, except for Lambros, who was in his 40s. As the 5th grade teacher was on leave during most of my fieldwork, Dimitris participated in the research both as a GAL teacher and as the 5th grade teacher, as he had been teaching most secondary subjects to these pupils for two years.

In the three participating grades, 31 out of 32 pupils participated in the research. There was only one Greek-Cypriot pupil in the 3rd grade and three pupils with a Greek-Cypriot father: two in the 4th and one in the 5th grade. The remainder of the pupils came from migrant families and one pupil in the 3rd grade from a Syrian refugee family. Many pupils had been born abroad and had come to Cyprus when they were at school age. At home, most non-Greek-Cypriot pupils spoke their home languages, while some spoke Greek, as well. Most pupils were Orthodox Christian, but there were also a few Muslims in the 3rd and 5th grade. The teachers described the children as coming from very low to - in very few cases - middle SES backgrounds.

Having outlined the research context and the participants, the chapter turns to the presentation and discussion of the findings in this school, focusing first on the school ethos.

6.3 School Ethos and Intercultural Education

Everyday school life in the ZEP school reflected the coexistence of the competing ideologies of Hellenocentrism and interculturalism and the promotion of contradictory beliefs and values about cultural diversity, as in St Lazarus school. However, in the ZEP school, both at the school and at the classroom level, efforts were made to negotiate the long-established Hellenocentric and Orthodox Christian ethos permeating the education system, as explained below.

The school environment reflected the staff members' efforts to minimize the pervasive influence of the nationalistic and Orthodox Christian ethos on education.

The school façade did not differ from that of mainstream schools. The Greek, the Cypriot and the European Union flags were hoisted outside the school. Upon entering the school, one noticed symbols of the Greek-Cypriot identity and culture, such as a big Orthodox Christian icon and a showcase with cultural artefacts from Cyprus and two other countries. However, walking through the school corridors and into the classrooms, one soon realized the multiculturalism characterizing the school population. Children's paintings with words, like 'solidarity', 'cooperation', 'respect' and 'love', in various languages, including Greek, adorned the school walls. On each classroom door, a colourful poster manifested the multiculturalism in the class and / or the teachers' high expectations of their pupils. For instance, the 4th grade poster presented a photo of the pupils with the caption: 'The fourth grade is ready for everything. First in class and in the game!' in Greek, English and all the pupils' home languages. Unlike the school façade, prominence was given to the children's diverse identities and symbols associated with the Greek-Cypriot nation had a marginal position or were absent from the classrooms. For example, a small Orthodox Christian icon existed only on the backwall of the 3rd grade classroom and was treated as non-existent, as the morning prayer was never said. The classroom decoration suggests that the classroom was a space that allowed greater autonomy and deviation from the Ministry's policies and guidelines. Generally, the school decoration reflected the school's efforts to balance the nationalistic and Orthodox Christian ethos prevailing in the Greek-Cypriot education system and society, and a pluralistic and inclusive ethos in response to the pupil population.

Similar efforts were reflected in the school's approach to educational structures that are commonly underpinned by ethnic nationalism, such as national commemorative events and the 'I don't forget' policy. As the head teacher mentioned:

You can't have a national celebration. Our national celebrations are adapted to the children's distinctive features. We'll say the things we have to say, some things will take place, so that they understand why there is this national commemorative event in this country, but we always try to include something about them, as well.

Panagiotis' phrase *'We'll say the things we have to say'* indicates his understanding of their choices as delimited by the centralized education system and by extension, by the political, historical and sociocultural context, which in a way obliged them to have these national commemorative events. Nevertheless, the school provided space for the inclusion of their minority ethnic pupils' voices, histories and knowledges. Moreover, most participant teachers reported that efforts were made to avoid reproducing negative stereotypes of the Turks. For instance, as Stella (3rd gr.) explained, her response to the MoEC-defined educational objective of 'I don't forget' aimed at helping her pupils *'become familiar with their place'*, focusing on Cyprus' geographical features, rather than reproducing the conflict discourse.

The negotiation of what was described by all teachers as a predominantly ethnocentric and Orthodox Christian-centred ethos permeating the education system was enabled by several factors. This negotiation was understood by all staff members as necessitated by the composition of the pupil population, which *'forces you to be intercultural. It doesn't let you do anything else'* (Dimitris, 5th gr.). The school's history and reputation as *'a school for foreign kids'* (Stella, 3rd gr.) and the substantial degree of autonomy granted by the Ministry to the ZEP school to respond to the needs of its pupils seemed to have facilitated the school's creative mediation of the MoEC's guidelines:

Of course, there is adjustment. From the Ministry there is no pressure on the specific issue. On the contrary. The school has the latitude to handle issues – of course, within the framework of the curriculum...But there is no demand on behalf of the Ministry that you should have covered a certain amount of material and you haven't. (Panagiotis, head teacher)

Provided with this space by the MoEC, the headteacher allowed the teachers a high degree of autonomy to develop their own approaches to the diversity in their classes, with a view to providing the best possible support for their pupils: *'The head teacher's rationale is: 'Do whatever you think is best. I won't intervene'* (Lambros, 4th gr.). Combined with the extra funding the ZEP school could receive from the Ministry for projects, this autonomy provided the teachers with space *'to break the curriculum'* (Lambros, 4th gr.) and promote a more inclusive and

pluralistic ethos. Staff mentioned previously funded projects, such as multicultural cooking lessons with parents, exploring the local area, interviewing shopkeepers about their jobs and historical events, making a movie about parental experiences of immigration and a reading programme. Although these projects were an addition to the existing curriculum, which the school was obliged to follow, they provided opportunities to involve parents and to create links with the community, helping the children develop a sense of belonging. At the same time, they exposed pupils to multiple perspectives and educational experiences that extended beyond the school context. As the aforementioned examples suggest, these projects ranged from the celebration of diversity to the inclusion of diverse knowledges. However, the reduction of the funding available for the ZEP programme had restricted the opportunities for the development of such projects, as explained by the headteacher.

Overall, the school processes and practices reflected an ethos of care. Besides the aforementioned efforts to negotiate the prevailing ethos in the education system, the school took action to address their multiply disadvantaged pupils' socioeconomic disadvantage and support them in acquiring the dominant language and culture. Using funding from various sources, such as the MoEC, the Church and individual sponsors, the school provided financial and material support to families in need. Moreover, the Ministry-defined approach to GAL teaching was adapted to respond best to their pupils' needs. For instance, although the Ministry stipulated that GAL sessions were to be offered for a maximum of two years, the head teacher stated that they could be extended to three years, if necessary. Furthermore, the school tried to provide Greek language support to newly arrived migrants at an individual level. It also provided free afternoon homework support classes and evening classes, which were part of the ZEP programme and gave children the opportunity to engage in activities, like drama, music and dancing, which '*they couldn't afford otherwise*' (Lambros, 4th gr.). Once a week, Bulgarian and Russian lessons were also provided in these optional evening classes. All these practices reflect an ethos of care and willingness to help the children.

However, the aforementioned well-intended efforts did not seem to be accompanied by a systematic whole-school approach to combat discrimination and recognise and include diverse knowledges, experiences and voices in school life and in the learning process. As Stella observed:

Of course, they learn their language in the ZEP, but, if they want to, and besides that, there is nothing else, for example, to tell them: 'You know you have [something] to offer, too'. Simply forcing them to assimilate is what makes them feel alien in this country, I think.

Stella expressed her concerns about the absence of their minority ethnic pupils' linguistic and cultural capitals from the official curriculum, which sustained their marginalization in the education system and their alienation. Similar concerns were also expressed by the head teacher and other teachers. The use of the pupils' home languages at the school level was not forbidden, but it was mainly restricted to breaks, school celebrations and pupils' artwork. In class, its use depended on each teacher's beliefs and degree of knowledge about second language learning. As regards religious diversity, the existence of some Orthodox Christian icons and the simultaneous non-representation of other religions and the limited options given to children as regards religious rituals, namely to either go to the Orthodox Christian church or stay at school, indicates that there was no space for other religions in this context, apart from Orthodox Christianity. The pervasive power and considerable influence of the Orthodox Christian Church on Greek-Cypriot education (Koutselini & Persianis, 2000), and the monolingual curriculum seemed to constrain what was understood as feasible in this context.

The marginalization of cultural diversity was also evidenced by the marginal position of parents' and pupils' voices in the school. The parents' council was described as '*non-existent*' (Stella) and, as all teachers reported, parents hardly ever visited the school to learn about their children's progress. Efforts to involve parents in their children's education were, generally, considered pointless, as the belief prevailed that these parents worked so hard to make ends meet that they hardly had any time to spend with their children and that: '*They can't help them at home, because most of them don't know how to write in Greek, to help them. They may not even understand what to tell them, what to explain to them*' (Stella,

3rd gr.). This assumption about the parents' incapacity to assist in their children's education inhibited teachers from viewing parents as resources or partners. Some school efforts to create home-school links were made through the ZEP funded projects described earlier, but these one-off activities left parents' marginal position in school life largely unchallenged. It could be suggested that the school's benevolent efforts to provide financial and material aid to families in need sustained and reinforced rather than challenged the negative representations of working-class minority ethnic parents as hardly capable of sustaining their families and, thus, by extension in assisting in their children's education. Similarly, deficit views of the working-class minority ethnic pupils and / or 'naïve egalitarianism' (Causey et al., 2000) seemed to contribute to the sustenance of the 'symbolic' role of the pupil council:

It depends on the pupils' level. For example, when I was in other schools, because they had their opinions and discussed and demanded some things, they knew their rights better as a classroom or school council...Here...while their opinion was sought or we told them, for example, we want to do this and that at school, you can help as a council...We saw that they were a bit hypotonic...Naturally, the pupil council's role has been devalued. (Dimitris, 5th gr.)

Dimitris' comparison of the ZEP school pupils with pupils in other schools reflects his limited understanding of power inequalities, differences in cultural and social capital, and the possibly low self-esteem of some of these pupils, as their identities did not seem to be recognised as of equal status as the dominant one and fully included within the school and the wider society. This naïve egalitarianism is also reflected in the head teacher's belief that '*there is no need for more specific action by the kids, otherwise this would be expressed by the kids*'. Naïve egalitarianism and prevailing deficit views of cultural diversity seemed to have resulted in a 'blame the victim' approach, which did not encourage the systematic critical review of institutional discourses, processes and practices to remove barriers to the pupils' and parents' active participation in school life. Hence, both pupils' and parents' voices, which could contribute to building a culturally responsive ethos (Johnson, 2003), remained absent from the school decision-making processes.

Taking for granted that intercultural education was ‘*a daily routine*’ (Panagiotis, head teacher), the head teacher and the teachers saw no need for a whole-school systematic approach to I.E. or for relevant school policies: ‘*The whole operation of the school flows naturally, without specific rules, goals and ambitious plans*’ (Panagiotis). However, the absence of a shared understanding of intercultural education, a shared set of values and school policies on intercultural education and discrimination did not assist teachers in developing consistent and coherent practices. For example, the Orthodox Christian morning prayer was said in some classes, while in the participant classes, it was not, in respect of the religious diversity in the class. Furthermore, while Stella and Lambros treated migrant newcomers’ home languages as a tool to assist these pupils in learning Greek and participate in the lesson, Dimitris, who was also the GAL teacher, portrayed children’s mother tongues as a barrier to communication and to their Greek language learning and, therefore, did not allow their use in class. These teachers’ different approaches to the children’s diverse linguistic capitals reflected not only their different degrees of understanding of second language learning, but also different beliefs about their working-class minority ethnic pupils. While Lambros’ and Stella’s efforts to help migrant newcomers participate in the lesson seem to reflect a belief in all pupils’ capacity to participate and achieve, Dimitris expressed his low expectations regarding his 5th grade pupils’ academic achievement: ‘*The level I believe is not so high...Therefore, the lesson is simpler....*’ Taking their low level for granted, Dimitris did not seem to be ‘*demanding*’ or ‘*to push the children*’ to participate and achieve in their education, as suggested by Lambros. On the contrary, he seemed to prioritize the children’s wellbeing over their education:

The children trust me and they feel I am a bit closer to them [than other teachers] and that’s why I am lenient. Ok, it may sometimes be bad especially in class...but I try to be friendlier towards them, so that they tell me some of their problems, which I believe is the most important [thing] ...

Dimitris seemed to construct his pupils as vulnerable and in need of protection and he prioritized building a friendly relationship with them. His deficit view of his pupils, his low expectations and his emphasis on their wellbeing without an equal emphasis on their education seem problematic, as research into effective teachers

of minority ethnic groups (e.g. Kleinfeld, 1975; Delpit, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1995) underlines the significant role of teachers in enabling their pupils to achieve academically and to learn the culture of power, so that they can cross borders and actively participate in society. As the ‘warm demanders’ in Kleinfeld’s (1975) research show caring about the pupils’ wellbeing needs to be accompanied by high expectations to enable the pupils to achieve academically. Hence, different beliefs about cultural diversity and different degrees of knowledge about diversity issues seemed to shape these teachers’ expectations of their pupils, their priorities and practices differently.

Contradictory beliefs and values regarding cultural diversity were recorded not only across teachers’ practices, but, in most cases, even within the same teacher’s practices. For instance, although Dimitris did not allow the use of the pupils’ home languages in class, he adjusted his RE (Religious Education) teaching content and practices in response to his Muslim pupils’ resistance to his initial efforts to promote an Orthodox Christian-centred ethos. While the former approach reflects the misrecognition of the pupils’ diverse linguistic capitals, the latter reflects respect for their religiously diverse backgrounds, even though in a reactive rather than proactive way. Similarly, while Stella tried to help Lina, a newly arrived Syrian refugee pupil, build her knowledge of Greek on her existing knowledge of Arabic, she did not address Lina’s constant belittlement by her peers. Instead, she attributed it to ‘*jealousy*’, because she sometimes dedicated more time to Lina in class to help her learn the language and follow the lesson. Thus, despite Stella’s affirmation of Lina’s diverse linguistic capital through her practices, she left its devaluation by her peers unchallenged, giving, thus, Lina contradictory messages about the value of her home language. Stella’s and Dimitris’ ad hoc and inconsistent practices reflect the absence of a theoretically informed approach to cultural diversity and the cognitive dissonance these teachers must have been experiencing faced with the unprecedentedly high degree of diversity in their classes. Lacking prior professional experience in such a highly diverse context and being ill-prepared and poorly supported by the MoEC to respond to this new situation, as they reported, they appeared to be oscillating between competing discourses

and practices in relation to cultural diversity and intercultural education (see 6.5 for a more detailed discussion).

A more consistent approach was taken by Lambros, the Greek teacher, whose words and practices reflected a heightened political literacy and a critical consciousness. Lambros tried to raise his pupils' awareness of the ways in which power operates:

With the help of Greek and Geography...I introduce the issues of different languages, different ethnicities, different religions, namely to give a historical position and generally, to constantly relativize everything...but also by commenting on current affairs...the girl who came from Syria etc. You will talk about the war etc., you will definitely talk about gender issues and the powers that are manifested...the point is to link, to draw the link between life and lesson, life and school...to see the powers etc. and not to consider them as self-evident. (Lambros, 4th gr.)

As he explained, his practices aimed at his pupils' empowerment and development of a critical consciousness that could enable them to deconstruct and challenge hegemonic discourses and structures, cross the socially constructed borders, and resist and transform oppressive relations. During some lesson observations, Lambros encouraged his pupils to reflect on the way power operates in various areas, such as social class, gender, race and powerful versus less powerful countries. Indicative of his efforts to raise his pupils' awareness of gender inequalities and to challenge essentialized views of race are the following questions he posed to his pupils in a lesson observed: 'Do boys and girls have equal life chances in Cyprus?' 'Is it because of their nature or do they teach them so?' 'Are all Blacks the same? Are all Whites the same?' Furthermore, during his everyday practices, he tried to include his pupils' diverse knowledges and experiences to the extent possible and to enable all pupils' participation, as manifested by his observed persistent efforts to include Daisy, the newly-arrived Bulgarian pupil, in the lesson, despite her limited Greek language competence. As he mentioned and as was confirmed by the lesson observations, he tried to assist newcomers to learn Greek in the mainstream class '*with the help of classmates who speak the same language, using dictionaries, through pantomime, through simple fairytales, through dramatization of real situations*' and other methods.

Like Georgia, the Maronite teacher in St Lazarus school, Lambros acted as an activist professional (Sachs, 2003; Hayes et al, 2006) and an ally to their working-class minority ethnic pupils at the school level, too:

Once we had a fanatic headteacher. All hell broke loose, of course. But there we stood up to him. We went so far as to bring charges, we went to the Minister etc. and the head teacher was replaced.

Unlike Georgia, Lambros' justice-oriented, transformative action appeared to be part of collective efforts of ideologically like-minded teachers, in other words, of a professional collaborative network in this school. However, as he mentioned, fewer of the new staff members demonstrated this ideological commitment and efforts to promote a nationalistic ethos by colleagues led to '*quarrels*'. Consequently, the school ethos seemed to be under constant negotiation.

To sum up, contrary to the staff members' belief that an intercultural ethos prevailed in the school, the absence of a commonly shared school vision, of a shared understanding of intercultural education and of relevant school policies and the teachers' different beliefs about cultural diversity and degrees of understanding of discrimination and power issues often resulted in the dissonance among and within most teachers' approaches to diversity issues. Consequently, there was no uniform school ethos. An ethos of care seemed to permeate the school processes and practices, which was underpinned, in some cases, by concerns for social justice and equity, as illustrated by Lambros' and Stella's approaches to the migrant newcomers. In other cases, it was underpinned by concerns for the children's 'feeling good', as illustrated by Dimitris' prioritization of his minority ethnic pupils' wellbeing over their education. Nevertheless, all participant teachers were found to make efforts to mediate the dominant nationalistic and Orthodox Christian ethos to a greater or lesser extent. These efforts seemed to be driven by a shared understanding of the moral purposes of education, as illustrated by their conceptualisations of the purpose of education that encompassed: '*the elimination of social inequalities and the children's self-improvement and self-realization*' (Lambros, 4th gr); '*the children to love each other, to play harmoniously, to be on friendly terms with each other...to have team spirit, collegiality*' (Dimitris, 5th gr.)

and *'learn[ing] how to be democratic, to be in society, how to interact with others'* (Stella, 3rd gr.). Although only Lambros' conceptualisation reflects a clear understanding of the political, transformative role of education, all conceptualisations suggest an understanding of the purpose of education that extends beyond the functionalist views expressed by most St Lazarus teachers. This understanding of the moral purposes of education combined with the distributed style of leadership of the head teacher, who is the focus of the next section, seem to have widened the scope for teachers to envision, and experiment with, alternative courses of action.

The school ethos was constantly negotiated among the headteacher, the teachers and the pupils within the constraints imposed by the centralized education system; the Orthodox Christian Church's pervasive influence on the Greek-Cypriot education; the reduced resources due to the economic crisis; and the political and sociocultural context. Hence, the school ethos seemed to be fluid and hybrid, reflecting the coexistence of the conflicting ideologies of Hellenocentrism and interculturalism in the education policy discourse.

As '[m]eaningful school change requires the support of the headteacher / principal' (Gillborn, 2004, p. 42), the next section focuses on the head teacher.

6.4 School Leadership and Intercultural Education

This section explores the head teacher's, Panagiotis', construction of cultural diversity and intercultural education, and his leadership style, to shed light on his understanding of I.E. and on the extent to which, and the ways in which, he tried to promote it in the ZEP school. Panagiotis' constructions of cultural diversity and intercultural education were characterized by contradictions, which, as in the case of St Lazarus head teacher, Antonis, seem to reflect his struggle to balance conflicting ideologies, beliefs and pressures in this Greek-Cypriot school with an unusually high percentage of migrant pupils. Unlike Antonis' single leadership style, though, Panagiotis' distributed style of leadership seemed to provide the

space for the development of teachers' collective professional agency in taking intercultural education forward, as is explained in this section.

On the one hand, Panagiotis described the ethnic and religious diversity of their pupil population as causing no problems, since '*[t]hey behave and operate like the rest of the children in a normal school. By normal, I mean that the [pupil] population doesn't consist of so many other-language-speaking children.*' On the other hand, he stressed that:

Challenges oftentimes arise, besides the learning difficulties children have, mainly because of the parents' socioeconomic status... A lot of times, it's their culture, depending on the country they come from, because there are cases when... school isn't their priority; it [their priority] is mainly survival, everyday food, accommodation, the simple things –simple for us...

Although he seemed to empathize with the difficulties that many of their pupils and their families faced due to lack of material resources, his representations of their working-class minority ethnic pupils reflect negative assumptions about cultural difference, even in the first quote above where he asserts that cultural diversity is not a problem. His statement that their minority ethnic pupils did not cause any problems because they behaved '*like the rest of the children*', like 'us', portrays deviation from the Greek-Cypriot way of being and behaving - the norm - as a problem. Moreover, his attribution of many pupils' underachievement to their '*learning difficulties*' and to their home cultures in the second quote suggests a deficit view of cultural diversity and a limited understanding of structural inequalities and institutional barriers to these children's participation and achievement in education.

Similarly, Panagiotis' constructions of intercultural education are characterised by contradictions. Specifically, he described I.E. as:

A harmonious coexistence of children from different ethnic backgrounds, with different cultures, with a different religion, who are in a country which has a specific curriculum, speaks the Greek language, has a specific religion and has to adjust itself and the children to a certain degree to this new environment. I believe it is a bidirectional adaptation of the indigenous and the foreign.

His understanding of I.E. reflects conservatized and depoliticized versions that focus on human relations and intercultural dialogue based on assumed equal status. By leaving power inequalities unacknowledged and unaddressed, however, such approaches risk sustaining or even reinforcing negative constructions of the Other (Delpit, 1995; Aikman, 1997; Pettigrew, 2004; Gorski, 2008) and reproducing rather than eliminating educational inequities (Gorski, 2006). This conceptualization of I.E. indicates a limited understanding of discrimination and power issues. However, his description of intercultural education as '*a necessary evil in a metaphorical sense*' necessitated by the high degree of diversity in this school suggests a potentially deeper understanding of I.E. that moves beyond the above depoliticised conceptualisation. His use of the word 'evil' suggests a sense of discomfort. This discomfort seems to stem from the head teacher's struggle between, on the one hand, his desire to help and respond to the needs of the school's minority ethnic pupils, as indicated by the prevailing ethos of care and the school's negotiation of the nationalistic ethos permeating the education system, and, on the other hand, the perceived internal and external constraints, which appeared to have resulted in his feeling powerless to effect substantial changes to existing practices in response to their pupils' needs.

The head teacher openly expressed his uncertainty about how to respond to the high degree of diversity in this school, when asked to suggest how intercultural education could be best promoted: '*I may not be in a position to do so. I am learning, too*'. His uncertainty and low confidence in engaging with I.E. seemed to relate to his relatively limited experience with this high degree of diversity, his limited knowledge about how to deal with it and the limited support by parents and the Ministry. As regards parents, he expressed his dissatisfaction with their limited involvement in school life: '*Unfortunately, there is not so much interest or time to engage; so, mainly everything happens without the [help of the council]*'. However, attributing parents' limited involvement to lack of '*interest or time*' did not seem to assist him in identifying potential institutional barriers to parents' participation and considering ways of removing them. In fact, for the head teacher even imagining alternative courses of action was out of the question given the

economic crisis and the ensuing reduction in the funding and resources that the school received from the Ministry:

Any change, especially as regards these issues, involves cost which given the situation at the moment is prohibitive. So, ok, we didn't go to the trouble of thinking of anything else, because even if we think, they will tell us there is no money.

The reduction in the school's funding had forced the school to abandon or restrict more inclusive practices, as evidenced by the removal of the multilingual assistant teacher from the school, the restricted number of MoEC-funded projects in the morning school and the fact that the ZEP evening classes had not started until March in the year of my fieldwork. However, change does not always entail high costs. Examples of practices to increase parental involvement in schools in the relevant literature (e.g. Aguado & Malik, 2001; Learning and Teaching in Scotland, 2005; Mitakidou, 2011; Shibuya, 2011) show that change can be effected at low or no cost at all. However, the head teacher's long professional experience in a centralised system, in which a top-down approach to change prevails; his deficit view of diversity; and his limited understanding of discrimination did not seem to enable him to envision and take a politicised, transformative approach to intercultural education. As he mentioned:

We receive some circulars every now and then, some information sheets, but I can't say that I or the staff have received any particular training about this thing. I think it comes mainly out of the humane approach we take and the education we have received.

The absence of specific guidelines and training could have been alternatively interpreted as an opportunity for transformative action, such as building a collaborative network within the school and in cooperation with other schools for the staff members to build their capacity for change, and developing a shared school vision, policies and action plans to guide teachers' collective action in taking I.E. forward, as suggested by the MoEC (see F:7.1.19.1/16, 3 September 2013). However, leading school reform for intercultural education without centralised financial and professional support appeared to be perceived not only

as not feasible but also as possibly risky for a school to undertake on its own in the specific political, historical and sociocultural context.

Within this context, Panagiotis understood his role as being:

To keep a balance and on good terms with all these agents...There is very good collaboration with everybody surrounding us, definitely with the Church, with the surroundings of the school, with the parents' council, as much as it can operate, ok, with the kids.

He seemed to understand his role as being a balancing one among often countervailing forces, such as, on the one hand, the children and their parents with diverse religious backgrounds and, on the other hand, the Orthodox Christian Church. His effort to keep this balance was illustrated by his approach to the Orthodox Christian morning prayer. When asked about the prayer, the headteacher replied that *'it should be said'* as specified by the Ministry's guidelines, while the non-Orthodox Christian children could stand and say a different prayer silently. This seemed to be the politically correct answer, so as not to dissatisfy the Ministry or the Orthodox Christian Church, which constituted the main sources of funding for the school. But, in practice, as Dimitris pointed out, *'he [the head teacher] leaves it a bit more flexible and to each teacher's discretion'*. The teachers used this space to respond to this issue in the way each deemed appropriate, depending on their own beliefs and values. Generally, the effort to keep a balance was reflected in the school's 'protective mediation' (Osborn et al., 2000) of the curriculum and the Ministry's policies and guidelines in response to their culturally diverse pupil population and the inclusion, though limited, of their pupils' diverse knowledges and experiences, which was evidenced in the school decoration, school celebrations and individual teachers' practices.

Acknowledging the realities of the political and sociocultural context of the school, which seem to make the development of official school policy for intercultural education challenging (Zembylas, 2010c), may have contributed to the head teacher's decision that there was no need for *'specific rules, goals and ambitious plans'* for intercultural education. As he mentioned: *'Ok, these emerge from daily routine...You start, there is a basis and from then on, you operate*

depending on the environment and the conditions...'. This reflects his understanding of the implementation of intercultural education as a negotiation among the context, the conditions within the school and without, and the basis. Although not explicitly defined, the basis seemed to have been shaped by the staff who had been in this school before his arrival:

Because upon my arrival, there was the staff that had already been here for two or three years, so I had to adjust more than they [had to adjust] to me, although the communication and adjustment gradually becomes reciprocal.

His understanding of the implementation of intercultural education is indicative of the distributed leadership in this school. From a distributed perspective, 'leadership practice is viewed as a product of the interactions of school leaders, followers, and their situation' (Spillane, 2005, p. 144). All ZEP teachers were actively involved in the school decision-making processes and the staff meetings seemed to provide them with the space to collectively build their capacity to engage with intercultural education. Giving them the opportunity to collectively reflect on their everyday experiences in the school and exchange views and ideas about how to best respond to the challenges they faced by teaching in such a greatly diverse context, the staff meetings provided the space for the development of a collaborative professional network in the school. Consequently, despite the head teacher's reluctance to take a whole-school, systematic approach to I.E., which was probably perceived as too risky in the specific, national context, the inclusive culture of openness, dialogue, trust and collegiality that the headteacher promoted among the staff members; his distributed style of leadership; and the autonomy this school was granted by the MoEC enabled the teachers to act as agents rather than as mere deliverers of the externally-defined curriculum, as evidenced by all class teachers' negotiation of the curriculum and the Ministry's guidelines in recognition of, and respect for, the cultural diversity in the school.

However, Panagiotis' belief that intercultural education is '*what we experience daily*' and the absence of a specific school vision and school policies, communicating specific values, did not encourage a systematic critical review of the school processes and practices, which were characterised by dissonance and

inconsistencies, as shown in the previous section. Whether the teachers' approaches to intercultural education were more aligned with depoliticized, conservatized versions or political, transformative ones seemed to relate to their different stages in the process of conscientization and the extent to which they viewed themselves as agents of change. These two parameters are discussed in the next two sections, focusing first on the teachers' political, historical and sociocultural narratives, which reflect their different stages in the process of conscientization.

6.5 Teachers' Political, Historical and Sociocultural Narratives and Intercultural Education

Like in St Lazarus school, most teachers' accounts resonated with the countervailing ideologies of interculturalism and ethnic nationalism coexisting in their political, historical and sociocultural context. However, as suggested in the literature (e.g. Arshad, 2012a; Kyles & Olafson, 2008; Mahon, 2006; Garmon, 2004) and evidenced among the teachers in St Lazarus school, the teachers' life and professional experiences seemed to play a key role in shaping their constructions of cultural diversity and intercultural education.

In line with the Ministry's promotion of the EU-recommended approach to cultural diversity, all the ZEP teachers acknowledged the relevance of intercultural education. However, while some teachers regarded it as an indispensable feature of quality teaching in any school – *'even in the supposedly high-class school in Nicosia, even there we have kids from various economic, cultural and social backgrounds'* (Lambros, 4th gr.) - others, like Dimitris (5th gr.), considered it to be essential in their school, but a beneficial yet optional bolt-on for schools with a predominantly Greek-Cypriot pupil population. This divergence of views could be attributed to the absence of a clear definition of intercultural education and the co-existence of the competing ideologies of Hellenocentrism and interculturalism in the Greek-Cypriot education policy discourse. The teachers' divergent beliefs about intercultural education reflected different understandings of I.E. and

different beliefs about, and understandings of, cultural diversity, which are discussed below.

The Greek-Cypriot teachers' constructions of cultural diversity, as reflected in their views of migrants, Turks and Turkish-Cypriots, indicated their oscillation between deeply held racial prejudices and a more empathetic stance towards the Other.

While Stella and Dimitris critiqued dominant discourses about migrants in Greek-Cypriot society and the state's approach to immigration issues, respectively, they, possibly unconsciously, reproduced some of the prevailing negative stereotypes about migrants. This is illustrated by Dimitris' reply when asked about his views regarding the existence of many migrants in Cyprus:

There needs to be a more correct policy... so that the balance between the number of permanent residents and migrants isn't disturbed...so that the state can also act more effectively in dealing with some phenomena of violence or some phenomena from the migrants, who may be poor or carry some diseases, so that it protects both the migrants and the permanent residents.

Dimitris did not directly express his personal opinion, but he criticised the national immigration policy. Through his critique, he expressed his concerns about the number of migrants in Cyprus, whom he portrayed as temporary residents by contrasting them with '*permanent residents*'; as possibly '*poor*' and, thus, potentially a financial burden on the country; and as sometimes '*carry[ing]...diseases*' and, thus, a possible threat to the health and safety of the '*permanent residents*'. When asked to clarify what he referred to as '*phenomena of violence*', he replied:

I: Incidents of violence against the migrants or from the migrants against the indigenous population?

D: Both from the one side and from the other. In other words, there should be some control and a correct policy for both, so that there are no groups who come to harm either one side or the other.

Dimitris attempted to present a balanced view by referring to violence triggered by the Greek-Cypriots against the migrants and vice versa. Nevertheless, his reference to '*groups who come to harm*' indicates that he mainly referred to the migrants' violence against the '*permanent residents*'. It could possibly be argued that the sudden demographic shift in combination with the economic crisis, the unresolved conflict, and the fear of the absence of state control may have all contributed to a sense of vulnerability and defensiveness, which is evident in Dimitris' words. The negative representations of migrants and asylum seekers in the media and in the political discourse may have also fuelled these feelings and his understanding of the migrants as a new threat to the already fragile security and prosperity of the indigenous population: as the new Other. Like Dimitris, Stella rejected the common allegations that 'foreigners take our jobs', while, at the same time, she hesitantly expressed her agreement with the equally common portrayal of migrants as 'benefit scroungers'.

Stella's and Dimitris' oscillation between countervailing discourses was also evident in their beliefs about the primordial Other, the Turks and the Turkish-Cypriots. Compared to most St Lazarus teachers, Stella and Dimitris seemed to be more open to the possibility of coexistence. Nonetheless, the acceptance of the primordial Other seemed to be conditional. Specifically, Dimitris believed that more state control would be needed for '*the extremist elements that 'dynamite' and provoke on both sides...to be secluded...so that we aren't influenced by external factors that aim at bringing division*'. His words reveal again a sense of vulnerability, fear, restricted agency and powerlessness, which did not seem to facilitate his deconstruction of oppressive discourses about the Other- both the primordial and the new Other – prevailing in Greek-Cypriot society. Stella suggested that:

Definitely if we make an effort, we can [co-exist], since this already happens, as they come [to the southern part... Now I don't know about the Turks who came...Of course, they may as well at some point, like these kids who come, be assimilated by the rest, by the Cypriots.

Employing the Cypriocentric discourse, which emphasizes the commonalities between the Greek-Cypriots and the Turkish-Cypriots, Stella distinguished

between the Turks and the Turkish-Cypriots. Co-existence with the former, the ‘eternal and primordial enemy’ (Spyrou, 2002), was considered more challenging, but possibly feasible, if they, like the migrants, assimilated. Stella seemed to reproduce the binary divide of ‘us’, the Cypriots, versus ‘them’, the Turks and the migrants, who needed to assimilate into the Cypriot culture to be accepted. However, it is not certain whether this reflected what she believed should happen or what she believed could enable the Other’s acceptance in Greek-Cypriot society. In another part of the interview, she was highly critical of the assimilation of migrant pupils through the Greek-Cypriot education system. Moreover, she spoke about her efforts to challenge the prevailing negative stereotypes and essentialist views of the Turks in her class, by *‘tr[ying] to explain that not all the Turks are bad’*.

Stella’s and Dimitris’ beliefs about the primordial Other reflect their oscillation between interculturalism and Hellenocentrism. On the one hand, their positive stance towards the possibility of coexistence with the Turkish-Cypriots reflects openness towards, and respect for, the Other and an understanding of the borders between ‘us’ and ‘them’ as permeable rather than rigid, allowing, thus, for more inclusive understandings of national identity. On the other hand, the conditions they defined reflect the deeply rooted division of ‘us’ and ‘them’, either presented as inflicted by ‘*extremist*’ forces or hinted at by suggesting that their acceptance depended on their becoming like ‘us’. These deeply-held beliefs about the divide between ‘us’ and ‘them’ seemed to have been largely shaped by their having grown up and been educated in the Greek-Cypriot context shortly after the 1974 war, namely a time when nation-building, the construction of the identity of the ethnic Self in opposition to the ethnic Other (Zembylas et al., 2011), and the narrative of unilateral victimhood (Hajisoteriou, 2012) held sway in Greek-Cypriot education. However, neither of these teachers’ narratives about the primary Other reflected the unilateral victimhood narrative and their views about the possibility of coexistence did not suggest the intolerance of the Other openly expressed by most St Lazarus teachers. This could be partly attributed to Stella’s and Dimitris’ exposure to friends’ and family narratives about the harmonious pre-war coexistence of the Greek-Cypriots and the Turkish-Cypriots. Moreover,

Stella's university studies and Dimitris' travelling and living in Greece for his studies were reported as having influenced their thinking about diversity. It could also be suggested that their daily experiences of diversity in this school combined with the teachers' collective reflection on these experiences at the staff meetings and the collective efforts to minimize the nationalistic elements permeating the education system provided opportunities for staff members to engage with alternative discourses and worldviews provided by their pupils and critical voices among staff members, like Lambros. As Lambros noted, working in this highly diverse school:

You will always see the Other's position. You won't get into the Other's position, you experience the Other for a long time etc. You see first of all the Cypriot society, the Cypriot life. You see parts that you wouldn't see otherwise.

By offering opportunities for critical dialogue with the world and with others, this school seemed to enable the staff members' engagement with their beliefs about cultural diversity, their role and their practices and their gradual conscientization (Freire, 1973 [1969]). Hence, the teachers' daily immersion into this 'different world' (Lambros) seemed to have contributed to these teachers' adoption of a more ambivalent and more open stance towards the Other - both the primary and new Other - compared to most St Lazarus teachers. Overall, Stella and Dimitris seemed to be at a transitional stage regarding their constructions of cultural diversity.

Unlike Stella's and Dimitris' oscillation between competing discourses and ideologies, Lambros exhibited a consistently critical stance towards oppressive discourses and structures in Greek-Cypriot society. Like Dimitris, he criticized national immigration policies but took a totally different perspective:

Migration is always positive. Ok, of course, there needs to be rationalism as regards the management [of migration]. Attention needs to be paid so that there is no ghettoization and there needs to be strict control of labour conditions.

Lambros called for measures to ensure the migrants' social inclusion and protection against exploitation, acknowledging, thus, the existence of

asymmetrical power relations and discrimination against migrants. He denounced the existing immigration policies and described as ‘*inconceivable*’ and ‘*terribly wrong*’ the fact that as regards migrants from non-EU countries:

A child that has grown up here, has been educated, has cost so much money to the Cypriot state...and then you send him back to his country. You don't keep him-it is terribly wrong-while you could make him a Cypriot citizen...economically active.

According to Lambros, the state's approach to immigration issues seemed to legitimize and sustain migrants' marginalization in Greek-Cypriot society and in schools, as social institutions. Similarly, he criticized the political stalemate regarding the Cyprus issue:

It doesn't help the people who live on the island either financially, or politically, or existentially. There must be a political compromise and the willingness to heal the traumas through a political compromise...it is a system characterized by monism and bigotry with the national narrative that, ...poor us who were one day attacked by all the bad forces of the world, the West, the Turks etc. with no reason. Having basic knowledge of the Cypriot history, [one knows that] it isn't precisely so.

Taking a more detached and critical stance towards the status quo than his colleagues, Lambros underlined the urgent need to move beyond the grand narrative of unilateral victimhood and resolve the conflict for the Cypriot society's progress.

Lambros' different life and professional experiences seemed to have enabled him to critically engage with and deconstruct the dominant oppressive discourses and structures in the Greek-Cypriot political and sociocultural context and develop a commitment to the values of social justice and equity. Specifically, having grown up in Greece and come to Cyprus as an adult, he had had different educational and socialization experiences from his Greek-Cypriot colleagues. Moreover, his status as a migrant who had been living in Cyprus for several years allowed him the perspective of both the insider and the outsider in Greek-Cypriot society. He also seemed to have a particular sensitivity to disadvantaged children, as illustrated by his previous job, where he worked with orphan children. His lengthy exposure to the lives of disadvantaged children in his previous job and in this school had given

him the opportunity to gain an insight into these children's lived experiences. This insight combined with '*readings, social experiences, interest in art*' and his postgraduate studies were presented as having contributed to his political literacy. All the aforementioned factors seem to have enabled him to develop a deep understanding of power and social justice issues informed by theory and practice, and a commitment to social justice and equity. His political literacy and critical consciousness were reflected in his explicit and consistent critique of power inequalities and the systemic racism in Greek-Cypriot society and his clearly and firmly empathetic, supportive and advocatory stance towards the Other, which was also exhibited by his construction of intercultural education. In fact, teachers' conceptualisations and practices of intercultural education reflected the different stages in the process of conscientization they were at, depending on their personal beliefs and values regarding cultural diversity and readiness, and possibly willingness, to review them.

As in St Lazarus school, teachers' conceptualisations of intercultural education varied and most of them made no reference to power issues, even though most ZEP teachers exhibited some understanding of institutional discrimination. In fact, most teachers' understandings of I.E. reflected their oscillation between competing discourses, reflecting their ambivalent views of cultural diversity. For instance, Stella understood intercultural education as the '*acceptance of diversity*', which reflects an approach that permeates both the official and the hidden curriculum and suggests respect for diversity. However, her reported efforts to help her pupils '*see that they're the same, although they have these differences*' seemed to contradict her stated understanding of intercultural education. This emphasis on sameness over difference seemed to suggest that difference is a problem and overlooked power inequalities and social structures. In contrast, Dimitris' conception of I.E. seemed to place emphasis on sameness alongside respect for difference:

Different cultures that coexist and one culture is learning from the other. They are linked, interlinked. We take the positives, we also see the negatives and there is this chemistry among all these cultures that ultimately, we're all the same, equal and we try to give prominence to each

culture separately and we strive for these cultures to coexist and to respect the difference and the culture of each child separately and we try to tell all children that they are special and that they must respect others as well...

This conception suggests intercultural exchange based on assumed equal status. Although Dimitris mentioned respect for cultural diversity, his conceptualisation, like Stella's, overlooked power inequalities. Similarly, Maria's (GAL teacher) conceptualisation combined celebration of diversity with an emphasis on our common humanity:

There is no such acceptance and the promotion of their culture, which we could have if we had meetings, where they could come to show their customs, their dances, their foods, their words, to speak, to bring people from their countries who live in Cyprus to speak about what happens, to see that a lot of things are the same.

Although Maria and Stella critiqued the exclusion of minority ethnic pupils' knowledges from the curriculum, Maria understood I.E. as an add-on to rather than as an integral part of the curriculum. One-off events that present different traditions, languages and countries were expected to help people realise that '*a lot of things are the same*'. However, such approaches to intercultural education that emphasise difference and leave the rest of the curriculum unchanged have been criticized for sustaining structural constraints and injustices and contributing to separatism and fragmentation (see 2.4 for an extensive critique). These conceptualisations of I.E. reflect the teachers' oscillation between competing discourses informed by the politics of equal dignity that emphasise our common humanity; the politics of difference that emphasise the recognition and celebration of diverse cultures and identities; and, in some cases, social justice, through the reference to the acceptance of, and respect for, the Other. Moreover, possibly influenced by the primary focus of the MoEC's circulars about intercultural education on GAL teaching, some of the teachers sometimes referred to intercultural education and the GAL sessions interchangeably. This narrow focus of the Ministry's circulars about I.E., the vagueness surrounding the meaning of I.E. and the coexistence of conflicting ideologies in the policy discourse combined with the absence of targeted efforts to develop a shared understanding of and

approach to I.E. at the school level seemed to have restricted teachers' capacity to develop a shared, clear and coherent understanding of I.E.

This oscillation between competing discourses regarding cultural diversity and intercultural education was also reflected in most teachers' practices. For instance, although Dimitris revised his RE teaching content and practices in response to his Muslim pupils' resistance, the rest of his professional beliefs and practices, such as his low expectations regarding his pupils' academic achievement and his exclusion of his pupils' home languages from the lesson, reflected the devaluation and marginalisation of his pupils' diverse knowledges and experiences. Despite his good intentions and willingness to respond to his pupils' needs and interests, his sense of vulnerability and defensiveness towards the Other did not seem to facilitate his realization of his power and privilege over the Other in this context, his transformative potential and, thus, his systematic identification and deconstruction of oppressive discourses and structures, with a view to providing his pupils with equitable educational opportunities. Unlike Dimitris, Stella, who exhibited a deeper understanding of institutional discrimination, took a proactive approach and tried to remove nationalistic elements from the curriculum, as evidenced, for example, through her approach to the Orthodox Christian morning prayer and to the annual objective of 'I don't forget' (see 6.3). Moreover, she reported that she discussed diversity issues in her class through fairytales, songs, movies or games. Some of these fairytales touched upon the issue of racism and, as Stella mentioned, she encouraged her pupils to share their own experiences of racism. However, this did not seem to be used by the teacher as an opportunity to raise her pupils' awareness of the ways in which power operates and to help them develop a critical stance towards the status quo. Instead, her aim was for her pupils to *'see that they're the same, although they have these differences'*. The politics of equal dignity seemed to have a strong influence on her views and practices, but she seemed to have incorporated ideas from more critical approaches to multiculturalism both to her beliefs and practices. This criticality and her knowledge about bilingualism were also reflected in her efforts to assist Lina, the newly arrived Syrian refugee pupil, learn Greek by making links to her home language. However, Stella's still limited – though growing – understanding of

discrimination did not assist her in identifying and addressing some of her pupils' devaluing behaviour towards Lina. Unlike Stella's and Dimitris' contradictory practices, absence of resources, such as books making links between the Greek language and the children's home languages, was perceived by Maria as a major constraint to her capacity for transformative action. The GAL sessions focused on teaching her pupils Greek and Maths, without including her pupils' linguistic capitals. As she stated: 'I don't speak their languages to be able to incorporate them.' Besides the absence of resources, her understanding of I.E. as an add-on to the existing curriculum seemed to further restrict her capacity to imagine alternative possibilities. These examples show that despite these teachers' good intentions, their limited professional experience of this high degree of diversity in schools; their limited, though growing, understanding of the ways in which power and discrimination operate; and their not having been equipped with the tools to assist them in redefining their roles, and practices resulted in their practices being ad hoc and inconsistent and giving their pupils contradictory messages about cultural diversity.

Unlike his colleagues, Lambros' conception of intercultural education and his practices reflected a more consistent politicized and transformative approach to intercultural education:

It isn't intercultural as regards solely the ethnic and the religious [aspects]. It is also the economic, gender, all these [aspects] that differentiate us. You need to give prominence to them, to make the kids capable of recognizing them, of being critical towards them, towards the powers that they create and the structures and to try through the class as a labour pattern to change them, but also to empower the children individually and collectively so that they change them in their lives.

His conception of I.E. was aligned with his beliefs about cultural diversity and about the purpose of education, all of which were underpinned by the values of social justice, equity and respect for difference. His described approach resonated with Giroux's (2016 [2006]) border pedagogy (see 2.6 on border pedagogy), as it aimed at helping his pupils develop a critical and transformative consciousness, which could enable them to deconstruct oppressive social structures; challenge and cross the socially constructed borders; and transform oppressive power

relations. He criticized approaches that celebrate diversity in a folkloristic sense for promoting stereotypical images of cultures that might not correspond to the children's hybrid identities and '*confuse the child*'. As presented in 6.3, he had high expectations of his pupils, he attempted to include their diverse knowledges and experiences and encouraged them all to participate in class. Moreover, he seemed to consistently resist the nationalism permeating the Greek-Cypriot education system both in his classroom and at the school level, by even engaging in quarrels with colleagues who wanted to promote nationalistic messages through the national commemorative events, as he said. His consistent practices reflected not only his commitment to social justice and equity but also a theoretically informed approach to cultural diversity, which as he said had developed through his postgraduate studies and his readings. His understanding of professional development as a personal, rather than the MoEC's, responsibility and as a lifelong process and his reflective and reflexive disposition, illustrated by his reported ongoing critical review of his practices to best respond to his pupils' needs, seem to have assisted him in developing a consistent justice-oriented approach to I.E.

To sum up, most teachers' beliefs, understandings and practices in relation to cultural diversity and intercultural education reflected their oscillation between competing ideologies and discourses. The absence of coordinated efforts to develop a shared understanding of, and approach to, I.E. at the school level did not seem to assist them in developing confident and consistent practices. Nevertheless, the ZEP school offered teachers ample opportunities for border crossings, enabling them, thus, to gain an insight into the lived experiences and the discourses of Others. This insight could facilitate their understanding of how power operates and affects their pupils' educational opportunities and life chances. Moreover, it could enable them to reflect on their own values, politics and pedagogy (Giroux (2016 [2006]) and gradually deconstruct essentialist, stereotypical images of the Other (Holliday, 2011) and the binary divide of 'us' and 'them'. All teachers were found to mediate the curriculum and the Ministry's guidelines to a greater or lesser extent, to respond to the needs of their culturally diverse pupil population. The extent to which they generally promoted a conservatized, depoliticised or a political, transformative version of intercultural education in their classes seemed

to depend on their beliefs about cultural diversity and on their readiness and, possibly willingness, to engage in reviewing deeply-ingrained negative beliefs about the Other and established practices. In other words, it seemed to depend on the stage in the process of conscientization they were at.

However, several factors seemed to restrict even teachers committed to social justice in providing their minority ethnic pupils with equitable educational opportunities, as suggested by Lambros' words: '*the truth is that some children that could comfortably stand in a very good class in a primary school of a different composition, ok, here they lose opportunities*'. The factors which the teachers perceived as affecting their agency in taking intercultural education forward are focused upon in the following section.

6.6 Teacher Agency and Intercultural Education

All the staff members understood the enactment of intercultural education as depending largely on the teachers and the school, as the Ministry's intercultural education policy was '*general and vague*' (Stella). However, most teachers disapproved of the MoEC's expectation that they act as agents of change, without their having been provided with the appropriate tools to enable them to enact their agency in relation to intercultural education. As Dimitris stressed this does not allow you to '*be as efficient as possible*'.

Echoing the head teacher, all teachers underlined the absence of centralized support for the promotion of intercultural education. Like St Lazarus teachers, most ZEP teachers expressed their feeling '*confused*' (Stella) and overwhelmed by the introduction of too many reforms without a coherent and clear philosophy of education underpinning them. While the teachers were expected to deliver intercultural education, the new curriculum and the textbooks were described as very demanding and promoting a Hellenocentric ethos and, thus, were understood as providing no space for cultural diversity:

It [The curriculum] doesn't include them [minority ethnic pupils]. It may have some aspects, like intercultural education which is general and abstract...They [the MoEC] expect the teacher...to include them somehow... If you give them [teachers] these books...will teachers invent things on their own? When? (Stella, 3rd gr.)

Besides the absence of specific guidelines, adequate and appropriate material and professional support to implement I.E., the restriction of diversity issues to specific subjects, like Health Education, in the curriculum was considered problematic as diversity issues should be dealt with 'any time' (Stella). Furthermore, all staff members complained about the absence of intensive, systematic and sufficient Greek language support for bilingual pupils. They identified several limitations of the GAL system, including the absence of specific teaching material; the GAL teachers' insufficient training; the restricted number of GAL teaching periods the Ministry provided to each school at the beginning of each school year, without taking into account newcomers throughout the year; and the absence of monitoring and evaluation procedures to ensure the effectiveness of these support sessions. Most of these limitations were also identified by St Lazarus staff members and appeared to be long-standing issues (see Elia, Vlami & Loukaides, 2009). This could be attributed to the Ministry's limited knowledge and experience, unwillingness or lack of resources to reform the existing system. The absence of a well-organized and coordinated Greek language support system was criticised for constraining some children's capacity to participate in the mainstream class and for forcing all teachers to simplify the curriculum, to include all their pupils regardless of their varying degrees of Greek language competence. This was understood by some teachers, like Lambros, as depriving their pupils of the educational opportunities they would have in a different school. In fact, both Lambros and Stella criticized the state for the ghettoization of the minority ethnic pupils in this school, which, did not assist either their social inclusion or their achievement in the Greek-Cypriot education system. Instead, this segregation 'labelled' their pupils, as '[t]hey see them from outside as the school for foreign kids' (Stella), while the political rhetoric of '[e]qual opportunities' was described as 'the biggest lie' (Lambros). Despite their justice-oriented concerns, the teachers felt that their voices were not heard much beyond the school, as illustrated by

Stella's call for '*more communication with the Ministry, because it is as if these schools are neglected.*' The absence of centralized support for intercultural education was interpreted by most staff members as reflecting the '*embryonic stage*' (Dimitris, 5th gr.) of the Ministry's approach to intercultural education and the absence of a determined and coordinated political effort to bring about the structural changes needed to accept, recognize and value diversity. This was understood as constraining their agency in relation to I.E. and contributed to their feeling alone in their efforts to promote intercultural education.

The teachers' sense of isolation and limited agency appeared to be reinforced by the limited support for interculturalism in the wider political, economic and sociocultural context of Cyprus, as illustrated by Stella's remark:

I see it [the policy about interculturalism] only in education... How about the rest of the society? I haven't heard anything... acceptance of diversity ...doesn't apply only to the school, but generally to the society.

Negative representations of cultural diversity in their context and the marginalization of alternative ideologies and discourses were understood as restricting possible constructions of intercultural education at the school level. As all the teachers stressed: '*Such big things don't change only in education*' (Lambros, 4th gr.). The economic crisis and the ensuing reduction in funding and resources was also presented as a factor that further constrained what was feasible.

Overall, the national education, social and economic structures were understood by some staff members, including the head teacher, as severely constraining their capacity to effect any changes to the current system. As Dimitris stated: '*[F]rom our position it is a bit difficult to do some innovative activities*'. Being used to working in a highly centralised education system and lacking the professional support, resources and experience of working in such a highly diverse context seemed to contribute to some staff members' low confidence in their capacity to take intercultural education forward, as illustrated by Dimitris' words: '*I am definitely neither the most experienced nor at a good level. I believe I need a lot of information either through seminars or through some educational programmes that the Ministry can provide*'. Viewing the Ministry as responsible for teachers'

professional development did not seem to facilitate Dimitris' and other staff members' redefinition of their role from civil servants to 'autonomous professional pedagogues' (Kontovourki, Theodorou & Philippou, 2015).

However, some teachers, like Stella and Lambros, appeared more confident to exercise their agency in relation to intercultural education. Unlike his colleagues, Lambros interpreted the absence of specific guidelines regarding the implementation of intercultural education as enabling rather than constraining their agency for change, which, as he explained, might not have been possible otherwise in the conservative context of Cyprus. Stella exhibited an understanding of her transformative potential, too:

I: Do you believe that education in Cyprus provides all pupils with equal opportunities to participate and achieve in education?

Stella: I don't believe it helps...It depends on the teacher...their expectations, their stimuli etc...I believe it is important for the teacher first to accept the child and to help the rest, if they don't, to accept them...

Both Stella and Lambros understood the significant role they could play in shaping their pupils' schooling experiences and in removing at least some barriers to their participation and achievement in education. Their understanding of their role as agents for social justice may relate to their critical awareness of the ways in which power and privilege operate, as reflected by their critique of the ways in which the system disadvantaged their working-class, mainly migrant pupils. Lambros' wide professional experiences of diversity, his deep understanding of discrimination, his commitment to social justice and critical consciousness and his efforts to 'constantly learn' seemed to have facilitated his taking a more consistent approach than Stella, aiming at helping his pupils develop a critical consciousness, too. Nevertheless, both teachers made conscious efforts to mediate the curriculum in response to the cultural diversity in their classes, had high expectations of their pupils and tried to include newcomers, helping them acquire the Greek language in the mainstream class, building bridges with their home languages.

In fact, even teachers who had low confidence in their capacity to promote I.E., like Dimitris, were found to achieve a certain degree of agency and transform some

of their practices in response to their pupils' needs and interests. Features of the ZEP institutional context appeared to have contributed to the development of the ZEP teachers' professional agency in relation to I.E. Specifically, the greater autonomy and funding granted to this school by the Ministry, the head teacher's distributed style of leadership and belief that intercultural education was the appropriate approach in this school, and the institutional history of multiculturalism seemed to have enabled the staff's engagement with intercultural education. Moreover, the composition of the pupil population seemed to allow teachers more freedom and provide them with more opportunities to engage with alternative discourses and courses of action. For instance, as Stella observed, the very limited number of Greek-Cypriots in the ZEP school facilitated engaging with alternative narratives about the Cyprus issue, while, in other schools, the risk of Greek-Cypriot parents' negative reactions was higher. Furthermore, the inclusive culture among staff members, the exchange of information and engagement with alternative worldviews provided by the pupils and critical voices, like Lambros', seemed to have facilitated teachers' local capacity building and the creation of a safe space for experimentation with alternative courses of action in this school. Hence, the ZEP school seemed to open up opportunities for teachers to achieve agency in taking I.E. forward.

The next section explores how the children in this school understood, experienced and responded to cultural diversity and to their teachers' different approaches to cultural diversity.

6.7 Children's Understandings, Experiences of, and Responses to Cultural Diversity

In all participant grades, the pupils' understandings of cultural diversity encompassed visible and invisible differences, such as country of origin, skin colour and language. The pupils in the two higher grades also referred to religion and culture. These axes of difference tended to be understood also as markers of discrimination in the Greek-Cypriot schools and society. For example, lack of

Greek language competence was portrayed as a major barrier to communication, to social inclusion and to academic achievement both through the photo elicitation activity and the role plays. Many pupils across grades suggested that a newly-arrived migrant or refugee child, like the Chinese boy and Syrian girl depicted in the photos I showed to them (see Appendix L), would probably experience fear, sadness, embarrassment and stress, because they would not understand what the teachers and their peers said and *‘when they come from a different country and they don’t know any Greek, they [children] make fun of them that they are alien, that they are from a different country, [that] they don’t know anything’* (Alex, 3rd gr., Pontian Greek). Through the role plays, children constructed linguistic diversity in deficit terms, presenting scenes of children making fun of Lee or Pana for their home languages or their incapacity to speak Greek fluently or children feeling pity for them and reassuring them that they will manage to learn Greek. These deficit views of linguistic diversity seem to be sustained by the MoEC’s approach to ‘other-language-speaking’ pupils, who are initially *‘mere auditors’* in class (Dimitris, GAL & 5th gr. teacher), while their removal from the mainstream class for GAL learning and the exclusion of their home languages from the curriculum reinforce the misrecognition of bilingual children’s diverse linguistic capitals. However, it was not clear whether the children’s constructions of diversity as a problem or a deficiency in the aforementioned activities reflected the children’s own views and experiences of their difference or their awareness of the existence of racism in Greek-Cypriot schools.

Children’s narratives about their experiences in the ZEP school during the activities revealed that for many children, this school constituted a safe space, where they felt that their difference was affirmed. For example, comparing her experiences in this school to her experiences in her previous school and in her social context, Jenny (4th gr., Bulgaria) noted:

They make fun of me because I speak a different language and because I am plump... [In my old school] they all chased me and I had to lock myself in the toilet so that they wouldn’t catch me, because they beat me and I felt sadness and fear... In my class here, however, no one makes fun of me.

This sense of acceptance and affirmation of their cultural difference in this school, also expressed by other migrant pupils in the 4th and 5th grades, seemed to have contributed to the fact that many minority ethnic pupils appeared to feel confident about their difference and actively mobilised their diverse knowledges and experiences in school. For example, some 5th grade children spoke their home languages during breaks and the 4th grade pupils shared experiences from their home countries during the lesson observations.

These children's experiences of affirmation and to some extent inclusion of their diverse capitals in this school seemed to have also empowered them to actively resist their misrecognition regardless of the power imbalance. An example of this resistance at the classroom level is the two 5th grade Muslim pupils' refusal to participate in the Orthodox Christian-centred RE lessons:

When we asked them to participate in the lesson, too, they reacted a bit more in a way that they showed us their displeasure. ...Because the initial lessons...were specifically about Christ, I saw them that they were somewhat distant. Sometimes, I asked them some things, but they didn't answer. (Dimitris, 5th gr. teacher)

This resistance led the teacher to revise the teaching content and practices to make them more inclusive and open to religious diversity. Dimitris' and other staff members' active listening and action in response to their pupils' needs and interests seemed to provide children with the space to actively resist oppression. At the school level, Dimitris referred to the destruction of some of the school facilities by the nearby secondary school pupils as a form of resistance to their previous headteacher. That school had a similar pupil composition and derived its pupils mainly from this primary school. Due to the proximity of the two schools, the primary school pupils also got involved: *'It has influenced us as a primary school and our pupils and there was turbulence in the school unit. There were thefts, broken computers.'* Although the reasons underlying the pupils' resistance to the head teacher were not provided, as Dimitris was not sure about them, it becomes evident that these pupils did not succumb but resisted to what they perceived as oppression. This resistance was expressed in a violent and inappropriate way, which suggests that they may not have been provided with the

tools that would allow them to resist in a different way. Nevertheless, these examples of resistance indicate the children's oppositional and transformative consciousness and their confidence in their difference rather than a low sense of self-worth, which could have been debilitating.

However, the status and value ascribed to the group the children were members of in Greek-Cypriot society seemed to affect the children's agency in negotiating their identity. Specifically, as in the 1st and 3rd grade in St Lazarus school, Pontian Greek children in all three grades in the ZEP school tended to self-identify as Cypriots or Greeks, unlike the rest of the pupils who tended to define their ethnic identity based on their parents' ethnic background. Only when I asked Pontian Greek children what language they spoke at home, they mentioned that their parents were from Georgia or Russia. The fact that they claimed the dominant ethnic identity or one close to it, namely the Greek one, could relate to the fact that many of these children had been born in Cyprus. However, it may also relate to the negative stereotypes about the Pontian Greeks existing in Greek-Cypriot society (Theodorou & Symeou, 2013), which may have led these children to use their agency to dissociate themselves from their stigmatized identities in this context. Similarly, in Theodorou and Symeou's (2013) study, Pontian Greek children did not want to share any information about their countries of origin.

Furthermore, the teachers' different approaches to cultural diversity seemed to also affect how the children experienced their difference in school and whether they used their agency to build bridges between their home culture and language and the culture and language of power or to dissociate themselves from their home language and culture and assimilate. This was illustrated by the cases of Lina, a Syrian refugee pupil in the 3rd grade, and Daisy, a Bulgarian pupil in the 4th grade. Both girls arrived in Cyprus and joined the ZEP school in the year when I did my fieldwork. Their teachers, Stella (3rd gr.) and Lambros (4th gr.), tried to include them and enable their participation in the lesson, by helping them acquire the Greek language in the mainstream class, making links to their home languages. Nevertheless, while Daisy appeared to build bridges between the two languages, Lina soon started resisting her teachers' efforts to encourage her to use Arabic as

a tool to help her learn Greek and *'didn't want different [material], because at the beginning the others were [saying] 'She doesn't know'. And she may not have understood their words, but she understood their reactions'* (Stella, 3rd gr.). The lesson observations revealed the prevalence of a competitive and individualistic culture in Stella's class, as reflected by the fact that some pupils tried to monopolize the floor, disrespecting, interrupting, correcting and making fun of their classmates. This culture appeared to have rendered this class an unsafe space for Lina, who made some mistakes and sometimes needed more time to reply, as she had just learned how to speak Greek. This was also noted during the activities, where her classmates constantly interrupted her and made fun of her replies. Despite Stella's justice-oriented concerns, by leaving her pupils' disrespectful behaviour unaddressed, providing individualised support to Lina and not including her other pupils' diverse capitals, she gave her pupils contradictory messages about cultural diversity and did not assist Lina in building bridges and developing a sense of belonging. As Stella's quote above suggests, Lina's classmates' 'othering' attitudes seemed to have contributed to her wish to dissociate herself from her 'othered' linguistic capital and assimilate, so as to fit in. On the contrary, Lambros tried to build an inclusive and collaborative culture in his class, involving Daisy's classmates in helping her with the tasks, trying even himself to use some Bulgarian words to help her and affirming all his pupils' home languages as reflected by the poster with a message in all the pupils' home languages on the classroom door. Combined with his efforts to assist his pupils in developing a critical consciousness, this culture seemed to create a safe space for Daisy to acquire the culture of power without abandoning her own culture. It could also be suggested that Lina's refugee and Daisy's migrant status and the fact that there was another Bulgarian child in Daisy's class also contributed to shaping these two girls' experiences differently and the ways in which they used their agency. Nonetheless, the two teachers' different approaches to cultural diversity, reflecting different degrees of understanding of discrimination and power issues and conveying different messages about cultural diversity, appeared to affect these children's agency in negotiating their positioning. While the inclusive and collaborative culture in Lambros' class appeared to enable his pupils' agency, the

competitive and individualistic culture in Stella's class and her leaving her pupils' 'othering' attitudes unaddressed seemed to limit her pupils' options regarding which capital to mobilise.

As some of the 3rd grade pupils' attitudes towards Lina suggest, 'othering' discourses and practices were reproduced by some children, despite most teachers' and the head teacher's belief that there was no racism among children. In fact, 'othering' discourses and practices were recorded in all classes. For example, during the activities, the 5th grade pupils revealed that:

Fatime (5th gr., Georgia – Pakistan): *We had a classmate. She was Muslim. ...they made fun of her all the time. They removed her hijab and she cried.*

Fatime was Muslim, too, but she did not wear a hijab. It is not certain whether this was her choice or the result of limited choice, as the hijab did not seem to be accepted by some of her peers. In the 4th grade, where Lambros made conscious efforts to assist his pupils in developing a critical consciousness, some of his pupils expressed their willingness to act as agents of change, as illustrated by Konstadina's (Ukraine & Cyprus) words: *'We've heard that other kids don't play with someone...We want to do the opposite.'* Her words reflect a willingness to transform the status quo that is characterized by the social marginalization and exclusion of some children, by embracing and including the Other. Some of his pupils' words, behaviours and interactions with their peers reflected these intentions. For example, providing her rationale for her groups' role play, in which the girls invited Lee to play with them, Jenny (Bulgaria) explained:

I chose this because it happened to me in the school I went to last year. They made fun of me and they didn't play with me and that's why I want to help others not to suffer as I did.

Her own experiences of having been 'othered' combined with the opportunities provided by Lambros for his pupils to reflect on such experiences and understand the ways in which power operates seemed to have helped Jenny develop empathy for the Other and a determination to help other children, so that they do not have similar negative experiences as hers. This conscious decision was reflected in her

support of her newly arrived Bulgarian classmate, Daisy, whom she helped understand the tasks and participate in the lesson and through her active opposition to the oppression experienced by some of her peers. For example, during a break observation, I happened to witness a bullying incident, where Jenny told her classmate Nancy (Pontian Greek): *'You have no right to beat other kids up.'* Nancy replied: *'When you get on my nerves, I do have the right.'* The break observations revealed that Nancy often bullied her classmate Kosmas (Pontian Greek). As Dimitris (5th gr. teacher) noted: *'Nancy is more dynamic and, in this way, she tries to show her power or her influence on [Kosmas]'*. Although Nancy was in Lambros' class, too, the role play she prepared was overtly racist:

Nancy laughed at Pana and shouted: *You're not welcome in our school. You are from Syria. Here we're all from Greece and Cyprus. Leave! We said: Leave!*

Even the fact that the part of Pana was played by me did not deter Nancy from strongly expressing her hostility towards the ethnic Other, who was presented not only as inferior but as unwelcome. When asked to explain the rationale for her choice of scenario, she replied:

Nancy: *Because when I was in kindergarten, there were two girls who bothered me all the time. I beat them all the time and every time my mum went to the office and she spoke with the head teacher. That's why I changed school.*

I: *So, you chose this scene of rejection...because you have experienced it, right?*

Nancy nodded yes.

Her past experiences of oppressive relations appeared to have led her to the reproduction of these experiences, by bullying those she perceived to be weaker than her.

As these examples of bullying and oppressive relations even by Lambros' pupils suggest, these children's everyday experiences of discrimination in and beyond the school seemed to have had such a pervasive influence on some of them that even the efforts of individual committed justice-oriented teachers appeared to have

limited impact on their pupils' beliefs about, and attitudes towards, otherness. The absence of a school policy regarding bullying and some of the teachers' limited understanding of its harmful impact on the victims and possibly of how to address it did not encourage staff members to take coordinated action to combat it. In fact, during my fieldwork, once a pupil reported a bullying incident to his teacher when they returned to the classroom after the break. Stella told him that he should have reported it when it happened and did nothing to address it. This inaction gave Nancy and other children the space to continue reproducing oppressive discourses and practices.

Hence, the openness to, and affirmation of, diversity in this school and some of the teachers' border pedagogy seem to have contributed to the empowerment of the pupils who were found to collectively or individually enact their agency to resist oppression, defying power imbalance. However, the differences among, and in some cases, inconsistencies in, the teachers' approaches to cultural diversity resulted in pupils in different classes experiencing their difference and school life differently, limiting, in some classes, while, in others, enabling children's agency in negotiating their identities. Finally, the teachers' fragmented, ad hoc and inconsistent practices resulted in the continuing reproduction of the misrecognition of certain Others by some children across all grades.

6.8 Conclusion

The conflicting ideologies underpinning the education policy discourse, the absence of a commonly shared school vision and school policies and most teachers' oscillation between competing discourses about cultural diversity and intercultural education led to the coexistence of different and often inconsistent approaches to diversity issues in the ZEP school.

Nevertheless, the composition of the pupil population; the considerable autonomy granted to the teachers by the Ministry and the headteacher to respond best to their pupils' needs; the inclusive culture among the staff members; and the teachers'

exposure to alternative worldviews and experiences through their pupils and critical voices among the staff members seem to have all contributed to providing opportunities for the staff members' conscientization in this school. Despite the perceived multiple constraints on their agency, the participant class teachers appeared to try to challenge and deconstruct oppressive discourses and structures to a greater or lesser extent, depending on the stage they were at in the process of conscientization and their beliefs about their capacity to act as change agents.

The school's 'protective mediation' (Osborn et al., 2000) of the curriculum and the Ministry's policies and guidelines in recognition of, and respect for, their minority ethnic pupils and inclusion of the children's diverse knowledges and experiences to the extent deemed feasible within the constraints of the system and the wider political, sociocultural and historical context appeared to have contributed to most pupils' sense of affirmation of their identities in this school and their empowerment to resist oppressive discourses and practices. However, despite the staff members' good intentions and justice-oriented concerns, the absence of a whole-school coordinated and systematic approach to eliminating discrimination and taking intercultural education forward resulted in the children receiving contradictory messages about cultural diversity and in the perpetuation of discrimination at all levels: personal, cultural and institutional.

CHAPTER 7: CONSTRUCTIONS OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION IN APHRODITE SCHOOL

Having presented the findings from St Lazarus school, a school with majority and minority ethnic pupils, and the ZEP, a school with mainly migrant pupils, the last findings chapter explores how cultural diversity and intercultural education were constructed in Aphrodite school, a school with mainly Greek-Cypriot pupils. The findings are reported and critically discussed under the key themes that emerged:

- School ethos and intercultural education
- School leadership and intercultural education
- Teachers' political, historical and sociocultural narratives and intercultural education
- Teacher agency and intercultural education
- Children's understandings, experiences of, and responses to cultural diversity

As with the previous two chapters, the chapter begins by describing the school context and introducing the participants and then turns to the presentation of the findings under the aforementioned themes.

7.1 School Context

Aphrodite school is situated in a high SES area of Nicosia, mainly inhabited by middle- and upper-class Greek-Cypriot families. The school had a total of 392 pupils, who were described by the headteacher as Orthodox Christian Greek-Cypriots, with the exception of one Russian and two Maronite pupils. The headteacher acknowledged that some children had been born in Cyprus from mixed marriages, but she still identified them as '*Greek-Cypriots with Greek as*

their mother tongue'. This identification is aligned with, and probably influenced by, the MoEC's characterization of children with at least one Greek-Cypriot parent as Greek-Cypriots. The staff was described as ethnically and religiously homogeneous, too. All 27 teachers were Orthodox Christian Greek-Cypriots. The staff, including the headteacher, was predominantly female.

On the first day in the field, I was impressed by the school atmosphere and the school facilities. At the entrance, as in all Greek-Cypriot schools, the three flags - Greek, Cypriot and EU - were hoisted. However, a 'Welcome' sign in Greek, English and Finnish with the corresponding flags welcomed visitors to the school building. Upon entering, one saw a small Greek-Cypriot folklore exhibition organized by the children and a showcase with the flags of various European countries next to it. The showcase exhibited various memorabilia from the Comenius programme this school had participated in. My first impression was that this was a school which respected the Greek-Cypriot culture but was also open to, and affirmed, other cultures. Furthermore, the school's participation in the Comenius programme and the pupil-led exhibition suggested that the school was active, innovative and student-centred. Its student-centred character was also evident in the spacious, colourful and bright classrooms, where prominence was given to the children's projects and artefacts, and in the yard, where there were several courts and ample space for the children to play. This school seemed to constitute a friendly and welcoming space for all children, including bicultural ones.

7.2 Research Participants

The participant staff members are presented in the following table:

Pseudonym	Position
Athanasia	Headteacher
Panayiota	3 rd grade (8-year-olds) class 1 teacher

Katerina	3 rd grade (8-year-olds) class 2 teacher
Androulla	6 th grade (11-year-olds) teacher & one of the four assistant headteachers

The headteacher had 27 years of teaching experience. After having led a school with a similar profile for four years, she had joined this school at the beginning of the school year when I conducted my research. The teachers' teaching experience ranged from 14 to 25 years, while they had been working in this school from two to five years. The 3rd grade teachers were in their 30s, while Androulla was in her 40s. Although my intention was to include teachers of three different grades, I had to restrict myself to the teachers who consented to participate in the research. Therefore, two of the participant teachers taught two different classes of the same grade.

In the three participating classes, 64 out of 68 pupils participated in the study. In all classes, at least a third of the pupils were from mixed marriages, some of whom were bilingual: 3rd gr.1: 7 out of 22; 3rd gr. 2: 6 out of 22 and 2 twins whose parents were Armenian; and 6th gr.: 10 out of 24. The non-Greek-Cypriot parents - the mother in most cases - were from several countries, such as Holland, Russia, England, Hungary, Albania, Finland, Persia, Lebanon, Romania, the Philippines, Colombia, Australia and Greece. In the 3rd grade, both teachers mentioned that one or two pupils were not Orthodox Christian, but they were not sure about their religious background. The 6th grade teacher made no reference to the children's religious background, probably assuming that all pupils were Orthodox Christian. Androulla was the only teacher who identified all her pupils as Greek-Cypriots, *'because one of the parents is Greek-Cypriot'*. All the teachers referred to their pupils' socioeconomic background as middle to high.

Having provided an overview of the research context and the participants, the chapter turns to the presentation and discussion of the findings in this school, focusing first on the school ethos.

7.3 School Ethos and Intercultural Education

Although there was no systematic, whole-school approach to intercultural education in Aphrodite school, like in the other two case study schools, a clearly stated school vision and action plans for the promotion of the Ministry-defined annual educational objectives and for the school's response to its local needs contributed to greater coherence across teachers' practices in this school. Efforts were made to promote a democratic ethos of respect and empathy. Nevertheless, echoing the contradictory ideologies underpinning the national education policies, the school action plans and institutional and teachers' discourses and practices in relation to cultural diversity reflected the promotion of contradictory beliefs and values about cultural diversity, as in the other two schools.

The concurrent promotion of contradictory beliefs and values regarding cultural diversity through institutional and teachers' discourses and practices reflected the absence of policies or action plans relating specifically to intercultural education. The belief seemed to prevail among people in the school leadership team that there was no need for the development of a whole-school approach to I.E. This appeared to relate to their narrow understandings of discrimination and I.E. The belief that there was no racism in this school was expressed by all staff members:

I have never encountered a case where a Cypriot pupil makes fun of another child, because they are from a different country... (Athanasia, headteacher)

This reflects the common belief among many adults that young children are innocent and do not notice 'race' (Gaine & George, 1999). This narrow understanding of racism, which was restricted to the attitudinal level, did not seem to assist the staff members in developing a political, transformative approach to intercultural education and in identifying and systematically addressing racism at the institutional level. In fact, different depoliticized understandings of I.E. seemed to have contributed to the marginalization of intercultural education in the school's agenda. For example, viewing the composition of the pupil population as

'homogeneous' and understanding intercultural education as familiarizing the pupils with other cultures, the headteacher presented its implementation as *'depend[ing] on each teacher's willingness'*. On the other hand, Androulla, one of the four assistant head teachers, understood intercultural education as cultivating pupils' respect for others and believed that *'intercultural education is [already] promoted'* through all the school processes and practices. These different depoliticized understandings of I.E. reflect the absence of a clear definition of intercultural education in the education policy discourse and of space at the school level for the development of a shared understanding of I.E. This absence of a shared understanding and the belief that there was no need for school policies related to I.E. seemed to hinder the development of a coherent whole-school equity- and justice-oriented approach to I.E. It could be suggested that the long professional experience of the head teacher and the rest of the leadership team members in a traditionally centralized education system did not assist them in imagining alternative possibilities and resulted in their reproduction of, rather than engagement with, the conflicting ideologies promoted through the education policy discourse, which were evident in the school decoration and in institutional and teachers' discourses and practices.

On the one hand, 'othering' discourses and practices appeared to be promoted through the action plans that aimed at the implementation of the MoEC-defined annual educational objectives, namely 'I don't forget' and the 'Cultivation of Active Citizenship'. Within the framework of the former objective, corners dedicated to 'I don't forget' had been created in each classroom and in the assembly hall, which displayed children's projects with photos of the occupied areas and slogans, such as *'Nobody forgets...Nothing is forgotten'*. Moreover, a whole week had been dedicated to whole-school events that served this objective and each class had engaged in various relevant activities. For instance, in Katerina's class (3rd gr. 2):

We created the identity of each occupied village or town from which each pupil originated...and those who were not refugees chose an occupied area that impressed them for a reason...we invited ... grandpas and grandmas to narrate their personal experiences ...We explored the pain caused by

the invasion through poetry, ...we read some texts about the days of the invasion, about life in the [refugee] camps and generally, the children familiarized themselves with basic concepts, what invasion means, what happened, the consequences of the invasion...

Such activities contributed to producing and reproducing collective memories of the war and the occupied areas and, thus, a sense of injustice and unilateral victimhood and trauma, which was explicitly expressed through the children's projects in the relevant corners throughout the school. Negative representations of the Turks within this framework as well as through national commemorative events reproduced the binary divide between 'us', the victims, and 'them', the uncivilized ones who have violated our rights and occupy 'our' lands. An 'othering' discourse was also reproduced through acts of charity the school engaged in within the framework of the annual objective of 'Cultivation of Active Citizenship'. Such benevolent activities aimed at fostering '*volunteering*' and '*social solidarity*', as specified in the relevant school's action plan. However, as Westheimer and Kahne (2004) note, such practices contribute to the pupils' development into '*personally responsible citizens*', but not into '*justice-oriented citizens*'. By focusing on character building and volunteerism, such approaches reflect a conservative response to social problems and fall short of enabling pupils to identify and address the roots of the problems (ibid.). Hence, power inequalities and social injustices remain unacknowledged and unchallenged. In combination with the absence of representations of African and Asian countries at the school level and their being represented as underdeveloped countries in some of the class lessons I observed, these charity acts seemed to reproduce 'othering' and reinforce the binary divide between 'us' and 'them'. The concurrent emphasis on Europe within the school, evidenced through the existence of European flags in the office area and in the assembly hall and the school's participation in a Comenius programme, further reinforced the misrecognition of the non-European Other and reflected a Eurocentric ethos. This Eurocentric ethos coexisted with the nationalistic and Orthodox Christian ethos, reflected through the existence of Orthodox Christian icons in all rooms, the national commemorative events and the aforementioned activities within the framework of 'I don't forget'.

On the other hand, the school tried to promote the acceptance of, and respect for, difference through its school vision and the action plan for the ‘Prevention and Management of Delinquent Behaviour’, which will be referred to as the anti-bullying action plan henceforth. Specifically, the school vision, as stated in a notice outside the headteacher’s office, was:

The creation of a pleasant school environment that prompts the children to constant action for the discovery of knowledge, the love and respect for the environment, respect for each other, cooperation, the love for fellow human beings, the acceptance of difference. (my translation)

Focusing on the promotion of universal values, while making no reference to power issues, the school vision seems to be grounded in the politics of equal dignity. Although the cultivation of these values is a worthwhile cause, the depoliticized character of this vision did not seem to encourage the deconstruction of socially and historically constructed borders. Furthermore, its focus solely on the attitudinal level and specifically, on the children’s attitudes, did not encourage the staff members’ identification and elimination of institutional discrimination. Similarly, the aim of the anti-bullying action plan, which was developed in response to cases of bullying directed mainly towards disabled pupils in this school, was ‘*to cultivate and develop our pupils’ skills, attitudes and behaviours of collaboration and acceptance of diversity*’. Its objectives included:

- *To behave without discriminating against people from a different country, of a different religion and colour;*
- *To treat their classmates in an empathetic and compassionate way; and*
- *To stand against school bullying, both as the observer and as the victim.*

The activities organized within this framework involved the whole school community – teachers, pupils and parents – in attending awareness-raising seminars conducted by experts or lessons about bullying and in formulating a school code of conduct. Such activities contributed to building the school community’s capacity to identify and address bullying. The interviews and the lesson observations revealed the teachers’ common efforts to promote respect for difference and eliminate bullying. The teachers encouraged their pupils to avoid taking a passive stance towards bullying or marginalisation and to act and report

such incidents, which, as the lesson and break observations showed, the children seemed to do. Moreover, the 6th grade pupils were involved in supervising pupils in the yard during breaks and other school events. Such practices fostered children's respect for otherness and opposition to discrimination. Furthermore, efforts to promote respect for European culture and, in line with the MoEC's guidelines, help the children develop a European consciousness were reflected in the aforementioned emphasis on Europe, as evidenced by the school decoration; the school's participation in the Comenius programme, through which a Finnish assistant teacher had joined the school for three months; and celebrations, such as the European Day of Languages and Christmas in Europe. All these efforts to foster respect for difference, though well-intended, did not seem to be underpinned by an understanding of how power and discrimination operate. Absence of such an understanding resulted in leaving institutional discrimination unacknowledged and unaddressed, despite the efforts to promote a democratic school ethos, as explained below.

The school leadership team made efforts to involve the whole school community - teachers, pupils and parents - and sometimes external agents in the process of school improvement, as the aforementioned example of the anti-bullying action plan illustrates. Not only were teachers, parents and pupils involved but they were also provided with support to engage with the process of change. For example, committees of teachers were responsible for preparing the action plans in response to the Ministry-defined annual objectives and the school's local needs. As the headteacher explained, the committees studied the Ministry's guidelines and formulated the action plans. These plans were discussed at the staff meeting and each teacher decided what activities their class would engage in and when. Hence, although reforms and the educational objectives were usually introduced by the Ministry, the teachers in this school collectively defined the implementation process at the school level. In the implementation process, the teachers were supported by the existing Ministry and school structures, such as the Ministry-appointed subject consultant; the school leadership team, which provided them with material support; and the subject coordinator or the school committee, who disseminated knowledge and helped them develop an informed and coordinated

approach to the reforms and annual objectives. Besides teachers, the pupil council was also supported by teachers and provided with the space to meet regularly and discuss issues related to their school life. The pupils' views were sought about various issues and their recommendations or remarks were forwarded to the head teacher. The school had already acted on many of the pupils' suggestions, such as the installation of benches and the covering of an area in the yard. Similarly, the school took measures to actively involve parents in school improvement and school life. For example, parents were invited to attend the seminars on bullying organized by the school with the help of external agents and to discuss the school code of conduct, which was formulated by the central pupil council. Moreover, parents or grandparents were invited to do things with the children, such as planting a vegetable garden or participating in a futsal tournament. Individual teachers also invited parents to their classrooms to talk to the children about a topic. The school also had close links with the community thanks to the head teacher's understanding of the school as *'an open system that receives and transmits influences from and to the outside and, since as a system we are open, there has to be direct communication with all the agencies that surround us'*. These efforts to build partnerships among the members of the school community and beyond and provide them with support to build their capacity for change seemed to reflect a democratic ethos and a culture of respect and could have helped the school community develop a sense of ownership and commitment to the reforms and the capacity to implement them. Nevertheless, the school agenda as regards educational issues seemed to be largely defined by the Ministry's policies and guidelines, which, lacking a clear and coherent underpinning philosophy of education, seem to have contributed to the promotion of the aforementioned conflicting discourses, beliefs and values regarding cultural diversity and to an overall superficial engagement with intercultural education.

Despite the efforts to promote a democratic ethos, everyday experiences in this school showed that diverse voices and knowledges appeared to be largely marginalized. The school organized some one-off events for the pupils' familiarization with other cultures, which gave the opportunity to bilingual and / or bicultural pupils to present their second language or some diverse customs to

their peers. However, as explained in 2.2, such one-off events have been critiqued for presenting static, essentialised and exoticised images of cultures (see Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997; Banks, 2006 [1988]; Portera, 2008, 2011), which sustain rather than challenge their marginal position in a largely ethnocentric curriculum (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997). Moreover, there were no measures to monitor and ensure the representation and inclusion of diverse voices in school life. As the headteacher informed me, there were no non-Greek-Cypriot parents in the parents' council. This seems problematic, as these parents could provide useful insights into how the school ethos could become more culturally responsive and inclusive. Furthermore, it is uncertain whether bilingual pupils participated in the pupil council, as, according to the teachers, these children had learning difficulties and low self-esteem and / or their participation in class was limited. Similar concerns have been expressed by various scholars in the children's rights field, such as Wyness (2009) and Gallagher (2006), who stress that formal participation processes, such as pupil councils, 'are less likely to incorporate the voices of disadvantaged and socially excluded groups of young people' (Wyness, 2009, p. 535) and thus, tend to perpetuate, rather than challenge, existing inequalities.

Echoing the contradictory discourses in relation to cultural diversity promoted at the institutional level, contradictory beliefs and values in relation to cultural diversity were promoted at the classroom level, too. This was evident even in the classroom decoration. For instance, in both Katerina's (3rd gr. 2) and Androulla's (6th gr.) classrooms, the corners dedicated to 'I don't forget' in their classrooms evoked divisive emotions and messages through slogans, like *'Everything here is ours and foreign to you'*, and through the children's projects. Such separatist nationalistic messages coexisted with posters with values, such as 'respect' and 'empathy', and in Katerina's classroom, with posters with anti-racist messages, such as *'All people are equal. Only the racists are inferior... because they are inhumane'*. On the one hand, racism was condemned and respect of diversity was promoted at an abstract level, while, on the other hand, the divide between 'us' and 'them' was reproduced within the context of the conflict, sustaining thus the trauma and the sense of injustice and victimhood. Contradictions characterized most teachers' overall approach to diversity issues in their classes. For example,

lesson observations showed that while Katerina (3rd gr. 2) dedicated some lessons to raising her pupils' awareness of racism and bullying and of how to deal with them, in other lessons, she reproduced an 'othering' discourse in relation to the Turks and, generally, the non-European Other. For instance, in an observed lesson which was based on a text in the Greek language textbook about children from various Asian and African countries, such as Ethiopia, Sri Lanka, India, Afghanistan and Morocco, although Katerina tried to portray some of these countries in a positive way through comments like '*a wonderful island*', referring to Sri Lanka, she ended up reproducing the stereotypical, essentialist views about these countries found in the textbook through the videos she used to enrich the lesson as well as her own words:

Katerina: *Which continent are these children from? From Europe?*

...

Katerina: *From Africa and Asia. What do these continents have in common for the children living there? Why aren't there children, like Heidi, from Finland or children from Cyprus there?*

Giorgos (Armenian): *All these countries face problems.*

By constructing African and Asian countries as the subaltern Other, without any reference to the causes of the problems presented in their books, such as lack of clean water, poverty and child labour, the divide between 'us' - the superior and civilized Europeans - and 'them' - the inferior and uncivilized black Africans and Asians - was reproduced. The next lesson further reinforced 'othering' by presenting making a donation to charity organisations, like UNICEF and Action Aid, as an example of active citizenship. This superficial approach to social problems promoted by the textbooks and the whole school approach to the annual objective of active citizenship seemed to have naturalized this 'othering' discourse and, thus, did not seem to assist Katerina and some of her colleagues in challenging and deconstructing it. As these examples of the classroom decoration and the teachers' approaches to diversity issues illustrate, the contradictory ideologies, beliefs and values in relation to cultural diversity promoted through the school action plans were reproduced at the classroom level.

However, despite the action plans, there was some - though limited - space for teachers' negotiation of the MoEC-defined and school-promoted educational objectives and the dominant 'othering' discourses, as exemplified by Panayiota's (3rd gr. 1) classroom decoration. In the corner dedicated to 'I don't forget' in her class, some photos of occupied areas and photocopied images of war scenes around the map of Cyprus reproduced collective memories of the war and its consequences but did not reflect the pupils' reproduction of the narrative of unilateral victimhood and the sense of injustice, as the children's projects in the other two classrooms did. This difference reflects the teachers' different approaches to the conflict discourse, which were underpinned by different beliefs regarding the conflict. For example, Katerina (3rd gr.2) underlined the significance of the annual objective '*for the children to be aware of the existing reality – what is happening, because, unfortunately, they don't know*'. For Katerina, there seemed to be a single, objective version of the reality promoted through the dominant conflict discourse, as her words and the relevant corner in her class suggested. For Panayiota, this reality could be viewed from multiple perspectives:

We tried to approach it from various perspectives, from the perspective of the Turkish-Cypriots, who also became refugees, that they had dead and missing people, too... Definitely both sides are responsible for some things and we try not to cultivate hatred, especially since there are now so many migrants in Cyprus...

Besides presenting a multi-perspective approach to the Cyprus issue as fairer, she seemed to consider this approach necessary, too, due to the high number of migrants on the island. Unlike her colleagues, Panagiota exhibited some understanding of the relationship between ethnic nationalism and racism and, as she mentioned, made conscious efforts to avoid instilling her own prejudice, hatred and fear of the Turks into her pupils: '*Definitely even as a parent, for example, I wouldn't want my child to grow up feeling hatred or insecurity towards other peoples, or towards the Turkish Cypriots...I try not to communicate it*'. Panagiota appeared to reflect on her beliefs and practices and their potential impact on her pupils and to negotiate the dominant conflict discourse, which was reproduced at the institutional level. Her achievement of a higher degree of agency compared to her colleagues, who, as the lesson observations showed, reproduced

the institutionalised ‘othering’ discourses, appeared to have been enabled by her wider personal and professional experiences of diversity due to travelling and teaching experience in highly diverse schools. These experiences combined with her reflexive disposition appeared to have enabled her to engage with the hegemonic discourses and diversity issues more confidently than her colleagues, as is also suggested by her belief that I.E. ‘*clearly depends on each teacher*’. Like Georgia in St Lazarus school and Lambros in the ZEP school, Panagiota’s example shows that whether the institutional discourses about cultural diversity were reproduced or negotiated at the classroom level related to the teacher’s personal and professional histories and reflexive disposition.

Besides the teachers’ approaches to institutional discourses about cultural diversity, the teachers’ responses to the cultural diversity in their classes also varied, communicating different messages about cultural diversity to their pupils. Specifically, some teachers, like Panayiota (3rd gr. 1) and Katerina (3rd gr. 2), took an ‘additive’ approach (Banks, 2006 [1988]), as illustrated by Katerina’s reported practices:

Even in an unplanned and quick way I try to give opportunities to these children to show their civilization, their culture, their traditions. At Christmas, at Easter, we did a lot of recipes. In literature, they bring books from their country and they present them. When they were in the 1st grade, we had invited...their parents and they did a presentation of their country in cooperation with the child and me....

Such ad hoc, ‘additive’ practices, however, risk sustaining the marginalization of diverse perspectives, by leaving the centrality of the dominant perspective permeating the curriculum unchallenged (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997). Moreover, they risk promoting stereotypical, essentialised and exoticised images of diverse cultures, contributing, thus, to ‘othering’ rather than to the inclusion of diverse knowledges (ibid.). Therefore, such practices have been criticized for being tokenistic (ibid.; Gillborn, 2004). Other teachers, like Androulla (6th gr.), possibly influenced by the policy discourse, regarded and treated all the pupils as ‘Greek-Cypriot, because one of their parents is Greek-Cypriot’. Unlike her

colleagues' approaches, which were grounded in the politics of difference, Androulla's approach appears to be grounded in the politics of equal dignity:

As a teacher, I want to educate...to give the message that we all have rights in class and we should respect ... Basically, what I have always told them is to learn to put themselves in the other's position. I think this is the quintessence: empathy.

Androulla's words echo the whole-school emphasis on respect and empathy. Such difference-blind practices, however, may fail to address the diverse needs of the pupils and result in reproducing educational inequities (Gillborn, 2004; Arshad et al., 2005). As is evident, although these teachers' approaches varied, none of them addressed power and social justice issues. This seems to relate to their limited understanding of power and discrimination, as suggested by the prevailing belief that 'there is no racism here' and their beliefs about cultural diversity (see 7.5), and to their narrow understandings of the purpose of education, as explained below.

Like St Lazarus school teachers, Aphrodite teachers expressed functionalist views when asked about their understanding of the purpose of education. Socialization was emphasized by all teachers, '*so that they (the children) can integrate in a creative, fertile, effective way into the society*' (Katerina, 3rd gr.2). The aim seemed to be the integration into the society 'as is', since no reference was made to social reconstruction, power inequalities or social justice. However, some of the teachers' understandings of the purpose of education were characterized by contradictions which reflected their oscillation between competing ideologies and discourses regarding cultural diversity. For example, Panayiota (3rd gr.1) understood the purpose of education as follows:

It is definitely to educate, to acquire knowledge, but it is more about acquiring skills and I think a positive step has been taken in this field, especially in Maths, namely they build up the ability to think right...and the issue of socialization, to be able to develop right relationships, to behave right, to accept the others.

Her conceptualization seemed to reflect an effort to combine the conflicting ideologies of ethnic nationalism and interculturalism found in the policy discourse.

However, her repeated use of the word ‘right’ indicates normativism. It suggests the existence of one right way of being, thinking and behaving. Hence, her understanding of the purpose of education being the inculcation of the ‘right’, or, in other words, dominant, way of thinking and acting into children seems to leave no space for ‘other’ ways, which are automatically understood as wrong and abnormal. This seems to contradict the goal of promoting the acceptance of otherness through education and indicates the strong influence of the long-established ideology of ethnic nationalism on her thinking and her overall superficial engagement with the relatively recently introduced ideology of interculturalism. Similarly, Katerina described ‘*becom[ing] an active citizen*’ as ‘*[t]he ultimate purpose*’ of education. However, possibly influenced by the whole-school approach to the Ministry-defined annual objective: ‘Cultivation of Active Citizenship’, her understanding of active citizenship did not seem to extend to democratic citizenship. Neither in Katerina’s class nor at a whole school level were any efforts made to raise the children’s awareness of the causes of social problems and of how power operates, in order to help them develop a critical consciousness. Instead, ‘othering’ was reproduced. The inclusion of relatively recently introduced ideas, such as ‘active citizenship’ and ‘intercultural education’ in these teachers’ conceptions of intercultural education suggests their willingness to promote them. However, their wavering between conflicting ideologies and the absence of space in the school to engage with these vague concepts and in general, with policies and institutional discourses, processes and practices seemed to constrain their transformative potential and restrict them to ad hoc and inconsistent practices that communicated contradictory beliefs and values about cultural diversity. Androulla did not refer to any of these recently introduced ideas in her conception of the purpose of education:

For me, the ideal purpose of education is first of all, to build personalities, to socialize the children, basically to help the child develop emotionally and academically.

This conception, which focuses on the individual, seems to portray children as passive recipients of education and the teacher as the transmitter of knowledge and culture. This narrow view of her and the pupils’ roles did not seem to enable

Androulla to recognize and include her bicultural pupils' diverse knowledges and experiences. In fact, Androulla was not sure which of her pupils were children from mixed marriages. The fact that, unlike her colleagues, she did not draw on recently introduced ideas in the field of education could be attributed to limited confidence to engage with these ideas. Having completed her studies 25 years ago and having had no experience of teaching in schools with a high degree of cultural diversity and limited professional support may have led her to the exclusion of these ideas from her conception of the purpose of education and her practices. Like the school vision, these conceptions of the purpose reflect the absence of an understanding of the political, transformative role of education. Hence, they seemed to constrain teachers' thinking and practices.

To sum up, although Aphrodite school had a clearly stated vision, which promoted fostering the acceptance of difference among other goals, and efforts were made to promote a democratic school ethos of respect and empathy, strict adherence to the policy discourse and emphasis on the implementation of, rather than engagement with, policy reforms did not seem to enable these teachers to develop a clear and coherent philosophy of education to underpin their practices. Instead, the competing ideologies of Hellenocentrism, Eurocentrism and interculturalism found in the policy discourse were reproduced both at the institutional and, in most cases, classroom level. Although Panagiota was found to negotiate the dominant conflict discourse, a limited understanding of how power and discrimination operate, narrow understandings of the purpose of education and the absence of space at the school level to develop a shared, theoretically informed understanding of intercultural education and a systematic and coordinated whole-school approach to I.E. seem to have contributed to the teachers' superficial engagement with vague concepts such as 'intercultural education' and 'active citizenship', as reflected by their understandings of the purpose of education and their practices. Depoliticised approaches to I.E. resulted in the marginalization of diverse voices, knowledges and experiences both at the institutional and classroom level, sustaining, thus, a predominantly Hellenocentric and Orthodox Christian-centred ethos.

As the headteacher plays a key role in mediating educational change with respect to social justice issues (Gillborn & Mirza, 2000; Tarozi, 2014), this chapter turns to the headteacher's views and practices in relation to cultural diversity and intercultural education.

7.4 School Leadership and Intercultural Education

The headteacher's beliefs about, and approaches to, cultural diversity were characterized by contradictions. Despite her efforts to promote a democratic ethos in the school and her commitment to the values of respect and empathy, her long professional experience in a centralized and Hellenocentric education system; her narrow understanding of intercultural education and discrimination; her heavy reliance on the policy discourse; and the absence of support by the Ministry for I.E. did not seem to assist her in employing a social justice model of leadership (Theoharis, 2007) and leading equity-oriented school reform.

Athanasia's personal beliefs about cultural diversity seemed to partly disagree with her beliefs about cultural diversity in the context of schooling. Specifically, when asked about her understanding of cultural diversity, Athanasia replied:

Hearing the term, people of different nationality, with different language, different culture come to mind; just this, that some are different. But, for me, it doesn't mean rejection, it doesn't mean discrimination. Neither do I hold stereotypes about anyone, nor about the Turks. I consider them all to be humans, who have the same weaknesses, humans that grieve and suffer. I believe that I have developed empathy, so that I can understand even my enemy.

Her words suggest her opposition to discrimination, her recognition of the equal dignity of all human beings and her empathy for the Other. Her emphasis on both similarities and differences between the Self and the Other resonates with understandings of the relation between the Self and the Other that emphasize the interconnectedness between them (e.g. Derrida, 1984; Jenkins, 2008 – see 2.3), which can facilitate transcending binary divides between 'us' and 'them' and treating the Other as fully human rather than as inferior, subhuman or nonhuman.

However, Athanasia's views about the relative homogeneity of the pupil population in this school seemed to reproduce the binary divide of 'us' and 'them':

As regards the work that is done in class, it is positive, because the teacher doesn't need to differentiate their work...for an 'other-language-speaking' pupil or a pupil who is poor. The educational level of their parents and so, their experiences are more restricted and the teacher would need to support them more...Yet, I believe that for the pupils at least, having children from other countries in their class is a positive element. They can exchange experiences...provided that the teacher handles it right.

Although she presented cultural diversity in class as a potential resource that could enrich the lesson by exposing pupils to different experiences, her portrayal of cultural diversity as a challenge for teachers and her taken-for-granted assumptions about the low educational level of 'other-language-speaking' and 'poor' pupils' parents and the 'restricted' experiences of these pupils seem to reflect normativism. These contradictions in her views seem to reflect a tension between her personal and professional beliefs about cultural diversity, which could be attributed to the normativism characterising the education system. In fact, Athanasia criticized the MoEC for not supporting schools and teachers to take intercultural education forward:

It [the Ministry] adopts the terminology, but, in practice, does not do or send us anything besides some books that have been written for Greek diaspora children. We don't have anything specific either in our curricula or in the books that is stated that you'll use this in the case of other-language-speaking or children of a different cultural background. It depends on each teacher and on the headteacher what they'll do to approach these children or how they'll integrate them and how they'll help them keep their own elements.

The absence of professional support and resources seemed to have contributed to her understanding of cultural diversity as a challenge for teachers, to her feeling powerless and uncertain about how to respond to cultural diversity and to her disapproval of the MoEC's expectation that schools and teachers would act as agents of change.

Athanasia's approaches to intercultural education in the two schools she had led so far differed considerably. Specifically, in the school she had previously led,

where there were some Romanian pupils, Athanasia made efforts to promote a pluralistic and inclusive ethos, by showing them that *'you are welcome at this school, that whatever expectations we have of the other children, we have the same of you, too.'* To help them feel welcome in school and that their diverse identities were affirmed and included, she mentioned that:

I used to say a greeting in Romanian [at the school celebrations]...I sent some announcements at the beginning of the year in Romanian, too. We organized some events... and we invited these parents, too and we asked them to bring something typical of their country, if they wanted to...Other times we asked them to show us some customs of their place...

Her practices seem to be grounded in the politics of difference that aim at the recognition of diverse identities. Such practices, though well-intended, may contribute to the perpetuation of structural inequalities and injustices (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997; May & Sleeter, 2010) as well as to separatism and fragmentation (Fraser, 2000; Grosfoguel, 2012), unless they are part of a broader political, transformative vision which aims at the systematic removal of barriers to the pupils' participation and achievement. However, Athanasia seemed to lack an understanding of how power and discrimination operate that could have assisted her in developing such a vision, as her depoliticized approach to intercultural education in Aphrodite school illustrates:

I: Are there opportunities to implement intercultural education in this school?

A: Yes, there are through the lessons. You can very easily find a topic and use it to teach something. Now that I see here what the 4th grade has done about olives, I could study the other Mediterranean peoples who produce olives and instantly, give them the opportunity to see, to search on the web, to see a school in Italy, for instance ...It depends on each teacher's willingness, to delve into it, to think about it themselves.

In this school, Athanasia constructed I.E. as the pupils' familiarization with other cultures and left it up to each teacher to create opportunities in their class to raise their pupils' awareness of other cultures, if they wanted to. Although she presented the elimination of discrimination as their *'daily routine'* in this school, these efforts were not understood as related to intercultural education and the approach

presented appeared to further confirm the head teacher's narrow understanding of discrimination:

Discrimination may not only exist among nationalities, but it may also exist among people of the same nationality, either because of physique, or the way of thinking, or football teams. So, we try to say that this is not a marker of discrimination. We have a lot of things in common. We try to achieve this in our daily routine...we always try to ... cultivate empathy. 'Put yourself in your friend's position, how would you feel if they did so to you? How do you feel now?'

The staff members' collective commitment to eliminating discrimination and instilling certain values to their pupils, such as empathy and respect for difference, could contribute to laying the foundations for the deconstruction of borders and the development of the children's openness to, and respect for, difference. However, the focus was solely on the attitudinal level, while institutional discrimination remained unacknowledged and unaddressed, as explained in 7.3. Moreover, Athanasia's words reveal that discrimination '*among people of the same nationality*' was mainly targetted rather than racism, as illustrated also by her statement: '*Let's hope that we can help our pupils to accept each other within their own nationality...without having stereotypes about each other...*'. As explained in the previous section, racism was not considered an issue. Consequently, despite the fact that the head teacher took a different approach to I.E. in each school, both approaches reflected depoliticized and conservatized versions of I.E., which could be partly attributed to her limited understanding of discrimination.

The head teacher's decision to assign I.E. a marginal position in the Aphrodite school agenda seemed to relate to the fact that she perceived the composition of the pupil population in this school as '*homogeneous*' and intercultural education as an approach that addresses mainly '*foreign*' pupils:

I believe that generally intercultural education has to first of all give the message to foreign children that they are welcome at a place, it must support them with the educational capital they bring from their country...build upon it and through the teachers' stance show that we respect what you bring, but we have this to give you, because it is impossible to adjust our education to theirs and we shouldn't do so. But

we must accept and give them the opportunity to bring and inform us about things they have brought along.

Her conception of I.E. focuses on helping ‘foreign’ children build bridges between their home and the school culture. The focus of the MoEC’s circulars about I.E. mainly on the Greek language support of ‘other-language-speaking’ children did not appear to enable her to develop a broader understanding of intercultural education as an approach that could help all pupils regardless of cultural background to develop into ‘justice-oriented citizens’ (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). Moreover, in line with the Ministry’s guidelines, she described the pupil population as ‘homogeneous’, although she acknowledged that some of the pupils’ parents were ‘foreigners’; yet, *‘the children were born in Cyprus and they are from mixed marriages, so they are Greek-Cypriot with Greek as their mother tongue’*. Thus, their Greek-speaking pupils did not match the restrictive definition of bilingual pupils as ‘other-language-speaking’ pupils in the intercultural education policy discourse. Hence, I.E. was understood as of limited relevance to this school. In fact, the absence of centralized support for I.E. and Athanasia’s narrow understanding of I.E. seemed to have led her to view it as a temporary policy that was marginally relevant not only to Aphrodite school, but generally, to the Greek-Cypriot educational context:

Some years ago I wanted [to see some changes regarding the policy and implementation of IE] because the phenomenon was more profound, namely we saw that in each school we went to, we found foreign children, too. And the teacher needed some help to be able to support and if something is institutionalized, you follow it, while if they leave it, like now, there is a lot of indifference. But now, because in my school as well, both this one and the one I worked at last year, I didn’t have this issue, I didn’t notice [it] at all. On the other hand, we face so many problems today that I believe whether there is or there isn’t [any change, it makes no difference].

Her words reflect an understanding of I.E. and cultural diversity as ephemeral, as an add-on to the existing reality that would soon disappear. This understanding seemed to further discourage her from engaging with I.E.. Athanasia’s 27 year-long teaching experience in a traditionally centralized and Hellenocentric education system combined with the limited centralized support for I.E., mainly

focusing on the Greek language support of ‘other-language-speaking’ pupils, did not seem to assist her in expanding her thinking about cultural diversity and I.E. and about her role. As her phrase ‘*if something is institutionalized, you follow it*’ suggests, she seemed to understand her leadership mainly as transactional, namely as involving ensuring the smooth operation of the school and the implementation of the MoEC’s policies, rather than as social justice leadership (Theoharis, 2007). It could also be suggested that external control by the school inspector and possibly the middle to high SES mainly Greek Cypriot parents, who appeared to be actively involved in school life further constrained her capacity to deviate from the MoEC’s policies. Moreover, the fact that this was her first year as the head teacher of this school may have also contributed to her heavy reliance on the MoEC’s policies. Consequently, her narrow understanding of I.E., cultural diversity and her role combined with the absence of support by the MoEC, the ‘*many problems*’ she had to deal with in the here and now, and, possibly, external control by the inspector and parents and her limited time in this school seemed to have all contributed to restricting her agency in taking I.E. forward.

The headteacher’s construction of the ‘intended’ or ‘aspirational’ ethos (McLaughlin, 2005) and her enacted leadership style further attested to the limited attention paid to cultural diversity issues and to the values of social justice and equity in this school. When asked what kind of culture she tried to promote, Athanasia replied: ‘*The culture of happiness, of learning and of creativity*’. Building rapport with the teachers and the pupils and helping them feel supported, safe and happy in the school environment was the headteacher’s priority. Her being friendly and approachable seemed to facilitate communication with all stakeholders and the building of a democratic school community, as illustrated by the active involvement of the whole school community in the process of school improvement. Moreover, she was open to change and innovation and she made sure that the staff members, and if needed, the whole school community, were supported to effect changes, as explained in 7.3. Furthermore, she distributed duties and responsibilities to staff members about various aspects of school life, such as trips, Comenius programmes, environmental issues and others. However, as the head teacher explained, although the staff members’ - and whenever

appropriate, the rest of the school community's - views were sought, when there was no consensus, decisions were taken by the leadership team. Moreover, as regards educational issues, Athanasia appeared to heavily rely on the policy discourse and promote whole-school compliance with the Ministry's policies and guidelines, as illustrated by the school action plans, most of which aimed at the implementation of the MoEC's annual educational objectives. Hence, although Athanasia's leadership style seems to have been guided by values, such as respect, democracy, equality, empathy, happiness, innovation and creativity, this strict adherence to the policy discourse appeared to restrict the space for the staff members' collective engagement with the educational structures and dominant discourses about cultural diversity. Intercultural education '*depend[ed] on each teacher's willingness*'. This willingness appeared to relate to the teachers' beliefs about, and understandings of, cultural diversity and intercultural education, which are discussed in the next section.

7.5 Teachers' Political, Historical and Sociocultural Narratives and Intercultural Education

All participant teachers in Aphrodite school were dominant group members, namely middle-class, Orthodox Christian Greek-Cypriots, who had been educated, lived and worked in the same political, historical and sociocultural context. Apparently influenced by their context, their narratives, like those of dominant group teachers in the other two schools, echoed the competing ideologies of ethnic nationalism and interculturalism that coexist in the national education context. Differences in the teachers' personal and professional experiences of diversity appeared to shape their beliefs and responses to dominant discourses regarding cultural diversity slightly differently. Nonetheless, their institutional context seemed to restrict their capacity to deconstruct the historically established and institutionally, geopolitically and socio-culturally sustained borders between 'us' and 'them' and develop a political, transformative approach to intercultural education.

All teachers underlined the relevance of I.E., echoing the Europeanised rhetoric of interculturalism that was promoted by the MoEC. Intercultural education was described as ‘*necessary*’ due to globalization and the movement of people across countries for travelling, studies and work (Panayiota, 3rd gr. 1) and as ‘*important...as it is a matter of respect*’ (Androulla, 6th gr.). Moreover, according to Katerina (3rd gr. 2), ‘*human solidarity and interculturalism should be a permanent goal*’ rather than a temporary one implemented only when there is an influx of migrants. This understanding of intercultural education as a temporary policy that mainly targeted ‘other-language-speaking’ pupils seemed to be shared by all teachers, who, like the head teacher, tended to refer to ‘other-language-speaking’ and ‘foreign’ pupils when talking about I.E. As a result, I.E. appeared to have a marginal position in most teachers’ agenda: ‘*In this specific school, I can’t say it is my priority or our priority. I believe it is so, due to the composition of the pupil population*’ (Katerina, 3rd gr. 2). The marginalization of I.E. in the school agenda, the prevailing belief that the pupil population in this school was homogeneous and the pressure the teachers felt to respond to ‘*so many demands by the system*’ (Katerina, 3rd gr. 2) appeared to have mediated these teachers’ justice-oriented concerns. Their capacity to develop a political, transformative understanding of intercultural education appeared to be further constrained by these teachers’ personal beliefs about cultural diversity.

Their national context characterized by the ongoing conflict, the unprecedented recent increase of migrants, the economic crisis and prevailing negative representations of migrants in the media and political discourse appeared to have influenced these teachers, most of whom employed the ‘us’ versus ‘them’ discourse, when talking about migrants. Specifically, two of them portrayed migrants as a material and symbolic threat, while, at the same time, employing the human rights discourse and emphasizing our common humanity and equal dignity, revealing, thus, their oscillation between competing discourses or an effort to minimize the prejudice underpinning their negative representations of the migrants. For instance, when asked about her views regarding the arrival and settlement of a high number of migrants in Cyprus in the last decade, Androulla (6th gr.) replied:

A: ...*We must live together with these people and they have some established rights. Sometimes, however, I get angry ... [due to] the economic crisis it has brought. They may have rights, but, for example, if you went to hospital and you saw, let's say, queues of people and they had priority over the rest...*

I: *Who has priority?*

A: *For example, the Turkish-Cypriots... there is also the policy of changing the demographics of the area there [Northern Cyprus]. ...But, of course, people have rights. Definitely...They are humans like us. But, ... all those benefits – I think the people took advantage -maybe our people, too, not only the foreigners, but also our people ...*

Androulla's words echo various common societal stereotypes of the migrants, depicting them as a threat to the Greek-Cypriots' prosperity and power through 'the policy of changing the demographics' in the occupied part, the 'benefits', and the 'economic crisis' that immigration was alleged to have contributed to or even brought about. Her repeated phrase 'They may have rights, but....' suggests that although she acknowledged the Other's rights, she seemed to feel that the Greek-Cypriots' rights were threatened by the Other. Her alternating between the migrants and the Turkish-Cypriots suggests that they were all seen as the Other: as a threat that brought about injustices to the detriment of the Greek-Cypriots. Similarly, Katerina referred to 'some areas of Cyprus [as] hav[ing] been swamped by many migrants' and suggested that '[t]here are so many unemployed Cypriots due to the fact that some positions are taken by the migrants because of low salary'. The sense of threat and injustice seemed to allow the coexistence of the conflicting discourses of, on the one hand, 'us' versus 'them' and, on the other hand, human rights and interculturalism in these teachers' narratives, despite the contradictory values and beliefs about cultural diversity underpinning them. These teachers' implicit portrayal of the ethnic Self as the victim of injustice seemed to reproduce their deeply ingrained beliefs about the relation between the ethnic Self and the primordial Other, as explained below.

Unlike her colleagues, Panayiota (3rd gr.1) did not portray the migrants as a threat and the ethnic Self as the Other's victim. Her statement that 'we, the Cypriots, are much closer to each other rather than to a foreigner' suggests the existence of

distance between ‘us’ and ‘them’, but, by attributing this distance possibly to the migrants’ ‘*tough timetable*’ and ‘*financial difficulties*’ seems to reflect some understanding of the Greek-Cypriots’ privilege in this context. This difference between Panayiota’s and her colleagues’ portrayal of the Other was also noted in relation to the grand narrative of unilateral victimhood concerning the conflict, as explained in 7.3, and suggests her capacity to engage with dominant discourses about cultural diversity, which she seemed to have developed through her personal and professional experiences of cultural diversity and her reflexive disposition (see 7.3 for more details).

However, the institutional context in which these teachers worked, where the emphasis on the annual objective of ‘I don’t forget’ and the ‘othering’ discourse, especially in relation to the ‘Turks’, were very powerful and evident throughout the school (see 7.3), did not seem to enable even Panayiota to challenge and deconstruct her deeply ingrained prejudice against the ‘Turks’, which she openly acknowledged:

I am quite racist as regards the Turkish-Cypriots, the Turks, the occupied areas etc. I wouldn’t want a solution that unites us. To be honest, I prefer it as we are. I have a prejudice towards the Turkish-Cypriots, too. I’ve never been to the occupied areas, ehh, mainly because of fear. I think I won’t feel safe. (Panayiota, 3rd gr. 1)

The readiness and openness with which Panayiota and her colleagues admitted their negative beliefs about, and fear and distrust of, the ‘Turks’ indicates the legitimacy and naturalization of this ‘othering’ discourse in this school and generally, in the Greek-Cypriot education system (Spyrou, 2002, 2006; Zembylas et al., 2011; Charalambous, et al., 2013). Although her colleagues did not distinguish between the Turks and the Turkish-Cypriots, their portrayal of the prospect of coexistence as undesirable or impossible suggested their racial prejudice against both groups. This prejudice appeared to have been cultivated through their formal education which they received after the 1974 war, when ‘*the memories, the experiences of the war were much more recent*’ (Panayiota):

Maybe through the school, where we learn about the invasion, about the Turks, the impression has remained that they are barbarians, that they are

dangerous, that we may have lived together in the past, but I can't trust them any longer. (Panayiota, 3rd gr. 1)

Besides the negative representations of the Turks, the emphasis on *'I don't forget'* through schooling was reported to *'ha[ve] contributed to the development of a negative stance towards rapprochement...and the development of a fighting spirit regarding the liberation of our homeland'* (Katerina). *'The reality'* of the ongoing conflict (Katerina) combined with the continuing reproduction of the conflict discourse in their institutional context seemed to sustain and reinforce their negative emotions and essentialist and stereotypical understandings of the 'Turks', even in the case of teachers, like Panayiota, who appeared to be more open to cultural diversity and alternative discourses about the conflict and the migrants. Even though some teachers explained that they did not want to instil their own prejudice, hatred and fear of the 'Turks' in their pupils, their institutional context seemed to restrict their capacity to negotiate their deeply held beliefs about the 'Turks'. Although Panayiota's bi-perspectival approach to the annual objective manifested that she achieved a higher degree of agency compared to her colleagues, as she admitted: *'I try not to communicate it [hatred or insecurity]...now how feasible it is. Ok, even if you don't speak, it shows through a look, through a word'*. The absence of space for teachers to collectively engage with cultural diversity issues in the school seemed to also contribute to most teachers' anxiety about dealing with them, as illustrated by Katerina's resistance to the older MoEC-defined annual objective: *'Cultivation of a culture of peaceful coexistence, mutual respect and cooperation between the Greek-Cypriots and the Turkish-Cypriots'*. As she explained, she did not promote it, not only because it was contrary to her ideological positioning, but also *'because it is a sensitive issue that you don't know how to handle'*. Being ill-prepared and poorly supported to engage with intercultural education and constrained by their essentialist understandings of identity and limited or no understanding of how power and privilege operate, these teachers' capacity to imagine and engage with a justice- and equity-oriented approach to I.E. appeared to be limited, as was confirmed by their conceptions of I.E. and relevant practices.

Although all teachers' conceptions of I.E. emphasized respect for difference, neither their conceptions nor their practices seemed to be underpinned by an understanding of power and social justice issues. For instance, Panayiota (3rd gr.1) understood I.E. as follows:

I think it is for children to be able to familiarize themselves with civilizations and cultures of other peoples, so that they can respect them, they can appreciate them, they can acknowledge that they are equal to their own people and so that they can harmoniously co-exist, knowing the differences but with respect.

Panayiota presented the acknowledgment of the Other as equal to the Self as the aim of I.E, expressing, thus, her justice-oriented concerns. However, her belief that the recognition of the Other's equal status will result from the children's familiarization with diverse cultures seems problematic. As explained earlier, 'additive' approaches, which aim at the celebration of diversity (Banks, 2006 [1988]), have been criticized for promoting essentialised, simplified and reified images of group identities (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997; Fraser, 2000). These static images of the Other can reinforce and solidify binary divisions between 'us' and 'them' and hierarchies of superiority and inferiority (see Fraser, 2000; Portera, 2008). Hence, mere familiarization with diverse cultures without raising the pupils' awareness of power inequalities and helping them develop a critical consciousness risks reinforcing rather than challenging inequalities. Consequently, despite Panayiota's intention to help children recognize the Other as equal, the presented approach appears to leave structural inequalities unaddressed and, thus, fall short of challenging and deconstructing historically and socially constructed borders between the Self and the Other and promoting social justice. Similarly, Katerina's conception of I.E. reflects a depoliticized approach:

I understand it [IE] as a living laboratory with various civilizations and cultures that tie in harmoniously without losing their uniqueness, namely there is the common class culture, but within this common [culture] that develops among the children because of their relationship and their experiences,...to distinguish the identity of each child through their uniqueness, in other words, not to suppress them by any means, to make the children feel proud of their origin, show their origin on each occasion, helping the child have self-confidence and pride in their origin, but also the other children to develop the open-mindedness that we're not alone.

There are others around us equally important who deserve the same appreciation as we do as a nation... (Katerina, 3rd gr. 2)

Intercultural education seems to be understood as an approach that permeates the whole curriculum and involves respecting and affirming the children's unique identities, aiming at the development of minority ethnic pupils' self-esteem and the Greek-Cypriot pupils' 'appreciation' of Others and treatment as 'equally important'. However, the overemphasis on the children's origin, in other words, on the recognition of difference, seems problematic for two reasons. First, it indicates a limited understanding of the hybridity and fluidity of identities and may result in disrespecting the children's ethnic self-identification, which may not correspond to their ethnic origin. Moreover, as mentioned above, essentialist understandings of identity can contribute to the construction and sustenance of rigid borders between 'us' and 'them'. Second, it reflects an understanding of intercultural education as appropriate only for contexts where there are non-Greek-Cypriot pupils. Like Katerina, Androulla understood intercultural education as a way of thinking and acting that permeated the whole curriculum but unlike Katerina's emphasis on the recognition of difference, Androulla's conceptualization of I.E. appeared to emphasise the recognition of the equal dignity of all human beings:

For me it is being human, basically, it's understood that you accept the other, too...even if they have a different colour, a different religion etc. (Androulla, 6th gr.)

Androulla presented respect for the Other as one of her core values. However, by associating acceptance of the Other with the human nature, it seems as if she took acceptance for granted, while structural inequalities seemed to be overlooked. The different ways in which I.E. was understood by these teachers reflect the absence of a clear conceptualisation and theoretical framework of I.E. in the policy discourse as well as the absence of space at the school level to develop a shared understanding of I.E. and a coherent philosophy of education to guide their practices.

Despite these teachers' good intentions, their limited understanding of power and discrimination reflected in their conceptions of I.E. resulted in ad hoc and often contradictory practices, which left power inequalities and institutional barriers to the achievement of some of their pupils unchallenged. For instance, Panayiota's reported relevant practices seemed to either emphasize and celebrate difference, by giving opportunities to *'kids who come from other countries...[to] present their customs...whenever they want to say something about their country, they can say it'*, or emphasize sameness, by, for example, *'convey[ing] to the children that you may be Muslim, you may be Buddhist, but all religions say the same [things]'*. Katerina *'tr[ied] to give opportunities to these children [from mixed marriages] to show their civilization, their culture, their traditions'*, to raise her pupils' awareness of racism and bullying and how to deal with them through some lessons within the framework of the anti-bullying action plan, to provide individualized support to her pupils to better support them and to foster respect. However, her negative beliefs about cultural diversity, and especially the Turks, resulted in the reproduction of the 'othering' discourse in her class both with reference to the Turks and Turkish-Cypriots and Asian and black African people (see 7.3). In line with her conception of I.E., Androulla tried to foster respect and empathy and acting as a role model, she tried to treat her pupils respectfully. However, taking her respect for her pupils for granted, she did not critically reflect on the potential negative impact of her exclusion of her pupils' diverse knowledges on their participation. Almost a third of her class did not participate in the lessons I observed. Most of these pupils were children from mixed marriages. Androulla attributed their low participation to their being 'quiet children' and 'maybe...low performing' and to their not having educational support at home. Similarly, in both 3rd grades, the bilingual pupils were described by the teachers as *'fac[ing] difficulties'*. However, both teachers attributed these difficulties to factors related to the children and their families, such as their *'cognitive capacities'*; pathological causes, such as dyslexia, hyperactivity and attention deficit disorder; *'hereditary factors'*; absence of *'pressure at home, of control'*; and their long stay in their home countries, which was believed to result in their *'forget[ting] the Greek language'*. Hence, a deficit approach seemed to be taken, which did not seem to

encourage these teachers' critical review of their teaching content and practices to ensure that they matched their specific pupils' needs and interests and that their bilingual pupils' diverse knowledges were systematically included in the lessons. Literature on bilingualism (e.g. Cummins, 2001; Baker, 2011[2001]) underlines the need to treat bilingual children as 'a complete linguistic entity, an integrated whole' (Baker, 2011[2001], p. 16), as skills and knowledge transfer across languages. Moreover, actively accepting and validating 'the linguistic and cultural experience of the whole child' may affect their engagement with learning (Cummins, 2001, p. 20). The interviews with the teachers and the lesson observations showed that none of the participant teachers included their bilingual pupils' diverse linguistic capitals in the lesson, reflecting thus, a limited understanding of bilingualism. The restrictive construction of the bilingual pupil as 'other-language-speaking' in the I.E. policy discourse did not appear to enable them to expand their understanding of bilingualism, as it automatically excluded Greek-speaking bilingual pupils. However, these pupils might also need Greek language support, as conversational fluency does not entail academic language competence (Baker, 2011 [2001]). Moreover, the exclusion of other languages, apart from English, from the curriculum seemed to also restrict these teachers' capacity to consider alternative possibilities, such as the inclusion of their bilingual pupils' other languages in the lessons. Consequently, potential barriers to the participation and achievement of their bilingual pupils seemed to remain unacknowledged and unaddressed.

As it becomes evident, the teachers seemed to experience cognitive dissonance, oscillating between the conflicting ideologies of ethnic nationalism and interculturalism. Deeply ingrained historically established and politically, socio-culturally and institutionally sustained constructions of the Other as a threat – material or symbolic – and of 'us' as the victims of social injustice and human rights violation appeared to impede these dominant group teachers' understanding of the ways in which power and discrimination operate. Despite the teachers' good intentions to respect and foster respect for diversity, the vagueness surrounding the meaning and implementation of intercultural education; the narrow focus of the MoEC's circulars about I.E. on 'other-language-speaking' pupils; the absence

of a clear and coherent philosophy of education underpinning the Ministry's policies and subsequently, the school's action plans; the marginal position of intercultural education in the school agenda and, thus, the absence of efforts to develop a commonly shared understanding of, and approach to, intercultural education did not assist these teachers in engaging with and potentially challenging their essentialist understandings of identity and deeply held negative beliefs about the Other. Instead, these beliefs seemed to be reinforced by the institutionalized conflict discourse. As a result, their depoliticized approaches to I.E. left 'othering' discourses and potential institutional barriers to the participation and achievement of their bilingual pupils unaddressed and resulted in conveying contradictory messages about cultural diversity.

As teachers' constructions of I.E. are also affected by their perceptions of their agency for change, the next section explores the ways in which these teachers understood and enacted their agency with reference to intercultural education.

7.6 Teacher Agency and Intercultural Education

As in the other two schools, all staff members understood intercultural education as depending '*on each teacher's willingness*', '*to what extent they embrace certain values and strive for them*' (Androulla, 6th gr.) and '*on the effort they will make beyond what is expected*' (Katerina, 3rd gr. 2). However, the teachers believed that certain factors restricted their agency in taking I.E. forward.

Like the head teacher and the staff members in the other two schools, all teachers underlined the absence of centralized support. The introduction of too many reforms lacking an underpinning clear and coherent philosophy of education appeared to have resulted in most teachers feeling overwhelmed:

There are so many things in education and especially with the new curricula, that they have introduced everything: environmental and

intercultural and all these under the umbrella of the democratic and humane school. (Androulla, 6th gr.)

Without having been provided with professional support to respond to these changes, the teachers perceived the new curriculum as a major barrier to their capacity to respond to the needs of all their pupils and provide them with equitable educational opportunities:

I believe that a pupil whose performance is average or below gets lost in our education system...even the fact that the material is so much does not respect diversity, because it doesn't give the teacher the opportunity to divert a bit, to enrich with other elements...Definitely time restricts you... (Panayiota, 3rd gr. 1)

Like Panayiota, all the teachers mentioned that they felt under so much pressure to cover the large amount of demanding pre-specified material that they did not think they had much leeway:

Regardless if they tell us it doesn't matter if you leave a unit behind, since you have it there, you have the pressure and you feel that you have to respond. (Katerina, 3rd gr. 2)

Katerina's words suggest the teachers' heavy reliance on the textbook, which, as Kuiper and Berkvens (2013) suggest, may not enable teachers to take advantage of the space they are given for local curricular decision-making. Instead, textbooks may end up 'representing "self-imposed prescription"' (ibid., p. 16). These teachers' long professional experience in a centralized system, where they had been expected to deliver '*a specific body of core knowledge that the average pupil must have acquired by the end of the year*' (Katerina) combined with the absence of professional support to redefine their role and use their 'pedagogical autonomy for differentiated teaching and teaching that results in learning for all pupils' (MoEC, 2010, p. 15) seemed to restrict their capacity to imagine alternative possibilities. Feeling '*forced to work within a framework that addresses the average pupil*' and does not take into account the diversity in the pupil population (Katerina) and being '*constantly under pressure that you won't have enough time*' to cover the predetermined material (Panayiota), the teachers felt that they had limited scope for differentiation and the inclusion of culturally diverse pupils'

capitals. Health Education was presented as the *‘aspect of the [new] curriculum that favours diversity’* (Panayiota), while even the Cypriot culture was presented as having a marginal position in the Hellenocentric curriculum: *‘operating within the framework of books from Greece... is not correct, either, because Cyprus is a different context from Greece’* (Katerina). Their belief that they had limited power to bring about changes was reinforced by the limited attention paid to their views by the MoEC, as illustrated by Katerina’s belief that the teachers’ involvement in the design of the new curriculum had been ‘tokenistic’:

I still think that the new curricula were designed at an academic level and the teachers’ recommendations or sentiment were hardly taken into account... (Katerina, 3rd gr. 2)

Although teachers were asked to provide feedback on the new curriculum, Androulla’s words reveal their skeptical stance regarding whether their voices would be listened to: *‘Now they ask, but they [the curricula] have already been written and I don’t know whether all these will change’*.

Besides the limited support from the Ministry, the absence of a systematic approach to I.E. at the school level was also underlined:

It could be something more systematic, namely not just because we had Heidi [the Finnish assistant teacher], and it could constitute a school goal from September until June...It needs a coordinated effort, an action plan with a specific committee that will promote it and with the involvement of the children who come from other countries and the central pupil council. (Katerina, 3rd gr. 2)

Katerina recommended moving beyond ad hoc and fragmented efforts and developing a coordinated systematic whole-school approach to I.E., involving children in the process. Although the school provided the space for the local development of action plans and opportunities for the staff’s individual and collective reflection on the impact of their activities and practices on their pupils for the formative and summative assessment of the school action plans, the action plans and this reflection were driven by a concern to respond mainly to the educational objectives defined by the Ministry rather than to the educational needs of their specific pupil population.

The absence of centralized and local professional support for teachers' engagement with I.E. appeared to contribute to most teachers' lack of confidence in taking I.E. forward: *'I think it is extremely difficult and the teacher needs support in this area...I think that the teachers are left alone...We need help.'* (Katerina, 3rd gr. 2). Both Katerina and Androulla expressed their concerns that they were unprepared to teach in a multicultural context and underlined the need for professional development to promote intercultural education. Unlike her colleagues, Panayiota, who had had extensive personal and professional experiences of cultural diversity, was the only one who seemed to feel confident to implement intercultural education:

It has already been introduced by the Ministry, so I think that it clearly depends on each teacher how they will handle the issue through various subjects and texts that are available...

Nevertheless, even Panayiota would welcome some further professional development: *'Some further education or an approach, to see how somebody else approaches it and a demonstration lesson would help a lot'*.

Despite the perceived constraints on their agency in relation to I.E., most teachers made some efforts to promote intercultural education, which, were, however, restricted to ad hoc and inconsistent practices that resulted in giving pupils contradictory messages about cultural diversity and left the marginalization of their bilingual and / or bicultural pupils' diverse knowledges largely unchallenged. Taken-for-granted assumptions about their respect for diversity, as suggested by statements, like *'I don't think that any teacher will be unjust or regard a child as inferior or won't pay attention to them'* (Panayiota) did not encourage their critical reflection on their teaching content and practices, with a view to evaluating whether these actually respected and included cultural diversity.

Consequently, these teachers' long professional experience in a Hellenocentric and centralized education system combined with the absence of space and the tools for them to engage with I.E. seemed to restrict their capacity to redefine their

beliefs about cultural diversity, their role and their practices and develop an equity- and justice-oriented approach to I.E.

The next section turns to their pupils' understandings, experiences of, and attitudes towards cultural diversity.

7.7 Children's Understandings, Experiences of, and Responses to Cultural Diversity

In all participant classes, the pupils understood cultural diversity as encompassing visible and invisible differences, including language, country of origin, religion, skin colour and social class. Unlike the pupils in St Lazarus and the ZEP school, the children in Aphrodite school had not had direct experiences of migrant newcomers in their classes. However, the children exhibited an awareness of the existence of racism in Greek-Cypriot (GC) schools, as the photo elicitation activity and the role plays revealed. Many Greek-Cypriot and bicultural children suggested that a newly-arrived migrant or refugee child, like the Chinese boy and the Syrian girl, Lee and Pana, depicted on the photos I showed to them (see Appendix L), would probably feel '*uncomfortable*', '*sad*' or '*embarrassed*' in the Greek-Cypriot school, because '*children may make fun of [them]*', '*may be afraid of them, stay away from them*' or '*may consider these children inferior and themselves superior. They may use bullying; they may be racist*'. Along the same lines, some of the role plays in all grades showed scenes of bullying or of children making fun of Lee or Pana. The rationale these children provided for the chosen scenarios showed that their awareness of the existence of discrimination in Greek-Cypriot schools had developed primarily through their experiences of discrimination as witnesses or victims and through the awareness-raising sessions on bullying and racism organized by the school. Some children who had witnessed racially-induced bullying in school appeared to take it for granted that '*[t]his is what usually happens*' (Panagiotis, 3rd gr. 2, GC). On the contrary, a few children associated school life with positive experiences and emotions for Lee and Pana in the photo elicitation activity, suggesting that they would feel '*happiness*', '*joy*' or '*proud of*

themselves, because they were different and they could meet children from other countries'. Such views were expressed mainly by bicultural children whose diverse cultural capital was generally affirmed and included in the Greek-Cypriot education system and society, such as the British and the Greek capital. Consequently, personal experiences seemed to shape the children's understandings of cultural diversity in Greek-Cypriot schools and society differently. While most children portrayed religion, nationality, colour and language as markers of discrimination, for children whose diverse capital was overall highly valued and recognised in this context, cultural difference represented merely a difference, a boundary rather than a border (Erickson, 2004).

The children in the participant grades seemed to have a positive attitude towards their bicultural classmates, who appeared to be accepted and included in friendship groups, as indicated by the break observations, the teachers' comments about their pupils' relationships, and the children's replies in the handout 'My Friends and I'. Unlike some of the teachers' uncertainty about which of their pupils were from mixed marriages and / or about the ethnic origin of their parents, the vast majority of the pupils were fully aware, as suggested by their detailed replies regarding their friends' ethnic origin in the handout 'My Friends and I'. The bicultural children in the participant classes appeared to feel confident about their difference, as reflected by the enthusiasm with which they shared information about their non-Greek Cypriot parents' countries of origin and the languages they spoke at home. The children were so enthusiastic to talk about their diverse backgrounds that even Greek-Cypriot children who had been born abroad or had a non-Greek-Cypriot grandparent shared this information during the activities. It was evident that these children's mainly Western capitals were understood as an asset, as opposed to the non-Western capital of the Chinese migrant and the Syrian refugee pupils on the photos I showed to them. However, bilingual and / or bicultural pupils did not seem to draw on their diverse capitals during the lesson or break time, besides the English language lessons, when the English-speaking pupils had the opportunity to speak English. Although the limited time of my fieldwork does not allow for generalisations, the strong Hellenocentric and Orthodox Christian ethos, the powerful 'othering' discourses and the marginalization of the pupils' diverse

knowledges in this school seemed to limit the children's choices about which capital to draw on.

Institutional discourses about cultural diversity appeared to have influenced the discourses many children employed. For instance, several Greek-Cypriot and bicultural children in the participant classes not only acknowledged the existence of discrimination in Greek-Cypriot schools, but also expressed their opposition to it and empathy for the Other through the role plays and the discussions during the activities. In some of the role plays in the 3rd grades, the children invited Lee and Pana to play with them, while in all grades, there were some role plays which showed scenes of children defending Lee and Pana and stopping other children from teasing them. The rationales provided for the chosen scenarios reflected the children's empathetic stance towards the Other and a belief in our common humanity:

Yiota (GC, 3rd gr.1): *The message we gave is to help some children understand that it isn't right to make fun of some other children, because they are human beings, too and they have each and every right to play with others, to travel to other countries. They have the right to have a different religion. It doesn't mean that because we believe in Christ, everyone should believe in Christ.*

Pantelis (6th gr., Lebanon / Cyprus): *...racism is not right... we have a different skin colour, different religions, but we are still equal.*

Konstadinos (GC, 6th gr.): *Because there are some children who are not mature, who are still immature, but there are some children who are mature and they can understand that it hurts this child when they treat him like this.*

The expressed empathy, respect for the Other and opposition to racism echo the staff members' collective efforts to cultivate children's respect and empathy for the Other and their opposition to racism and bullying. However, there are doubts whether this empathetic stance and the denunciation of disrespect for otherness as 'not right' and 'immature', being mainly grounded in the politics of equal dignity, would be translated into the acceptance of, and respect for, all Others as Others, especially as, at the same time, some of the pupils reproduced the institutionalized 'othering' discourses about non-European cultures.

Echoing the institutional ‘othering’ discourses about the ‘Turks’ and black African people, some of the pupils reproduced negative stereotypes about these groups, without perceiving them as racially prejudiced:

A boy (6th gr.): *In Africa in the morning one may go somewhere and sit and beg for money, while someone else in America will wake up and go to work.*

A boy (6th gr.): *In some countries in Africa, some people, like girls or some others, may be disadvantaged in terms of rights, while in other countries, like in Cyprus, we all have the same rights.*

As these quotes illustrate, injustices and inequalities were presented as ‘their’ feature, while, by leaving injustices and power inequalities in Cyprus unacknowledged, Western countries, like ‘ours’, were automatically presented as superior. As regards Turks, the children’s projects in the corners dedicated to ‘I don’t forget’ in the classrooms and in the assembly hall reproduced representations of Turks as the enemies, as the oppressors (see 7.3). Such negative representations were also recorded in classroom interactions, as illustrated by a discussion during a Greek lesson I observed in Katerina’s class (3rd gr.2). The teacher asked the pupils to think about the 1974 war in Cyprus and identify the negative consequences of the war. Pupils mentioned consequences like ‘*it deprives us of freedom*’, ‘*deprivation of rights*’ and ‘*trampling of dignity*’. A Greek-Cypriot pupil tried to explain dignity by referring to Hitler:

Panayiotis (GC): *Remember about the 2nd World War with Hitler.*

Giorgos (Armenian): *Yes, the stupid guy.*

Katerina (Teacher): *Yes. They tortured them...They trampled upon their dignity.*

This discussion reproduced the narrative of unilateral victimhood and implicitly paralleled the occupiers with the ‘*stupid*’, barbarian Hitler and his army. The teacher seemed to reinforce rather than challenge such negative stereotypes about Turks. The promotion of ‘othering’ discourses in relation to certain non-European groups through the curriculum, through institutional processes, practices and the school decoration and by individual teachers seemed to encourage rather than

challenge the children's reproduction of 'othering' in relation to certain stigmatised groups in Greek-Cypriot society.

Even some of the teachers expressed their doubts about the extent to which their pupils would accept and respect cultural diversity in practice. Panayiota suggested that the absence of cultural diversity in their school made it easy for the children to respond in a socially acceptable way and express their acceptance of it, while she questioned whether their actions would be aligned with their words. Similarly, in 3rd grade 2, when talking about a lesson she had had with her class about '*the adventures of the migrants*', Katerina said that: '*The truth is that the children have a negative stance, namely what I understood is that they come and take our jobs, as I said earlier, of course...*'. Katerina's agreement with these views seemed to limit her capacity to challenge them when expressed by her pupils. Such representations of migrants contradicted many of the pupils' expressed empathy for the Other and opposition to racism. Similarly, in the 6th grade, many pupils' repeated representation of the West as superior to Africa seemed to contradict some of the pupils' stated opposition to racism.

The contradictory discourses regarding cultural diversity employed by some of the participant children echo the contradictory discourses promoted at the institutional and classroom level. On the one hand, the whole-school efforts to raise the pupils' awareness of bullying and racism and foster empathy and respect for diversity were reflected in some of the pupils' expressed opposition to racism and empathy for the Other. On the other hand, the school efforts to engender a nationalist and a European consciousness, while constructing the non-European Other either as inferior – in the case of black African and Asian people - or as the enemy - in the case of the Turks appeared to have contributed to the normalisation and naturalisation of 'othering' discourses about these groups, as reflected by the ease with which such discourses were employed by some pupils and teachers. The ease with which 'othering' was employed raises doubts about whether the children's expressed positive attitudes towards the Other would actually be translated into acceptance of, and respect for, all Others in practice.

‘Othering’ discourses in relation to cultural diversity were not reproduced in 3rd grade 1 during the observations and the whole class activities with the children. This could be attributed to the teacher’s stated conscious efforts to separate her personal from her professional beliefs about the ‘Turks’ and to her frequent discussions with her pupils trying to help them develop respect for otherness and specifically, accept and include Teresa, the disabled pupil in their class, in their friendship groups. However, my fieldwork, which lasted only for three weeks, during which the teacher never touched upon cultural diversity issues in the observed lessons, provided only a limited insight into the everyday interactions and the teaching content and practices. These may have also been influenced by my presence and therefore, it cannot be claimed with certainty that negative representations of certain Others were not reproduced in this class.

7.8 Conclusion

Unlike the other two schools, the existence of a school vision and of action plans mainly for the promotion of the MoEC-defined annual educational objectives but also for the school’s response to its local needs contributed to greater coherence across teachers’ practices in this school. Moreover, the head teacher encouraged the whole school community’s - teachers’, pupils’ and parents’ - involvement in the process of school improvement through consultation and the provision of material and professional support to enable the implementation of the school action plans. Overall, efforts were made to promote a democratic school ethos.

However, these efforts seemed to be driven by a school vision that was grounded in the politics of equal dignity rather than equity and social justice. Institutional barriers to the recognition and inclusion of diverse voices and knowledges in school life and in the learning process remained unacknowledged and unaddressed, as illustrated by the non-representation of non-Greek-Cypriot parents in the parents’ council and the marginalisation of bicultural pupils’ diverse linguistic and cultural capitals at the school and classroom level. Without having been equipped with the tools to move from a transactional to a transformational

(Blair, 2002) or social justice leadership style (Theoharis, 2007), the head teacher's capacity to lead equity- and justice-oriented school reform appeared to be constrained by her narrow understanding of her role and of intercultural education and discrimination, which seemed to have been heavily influenced by her long professional experience in a highly centralized and Hellenocentric education system. The continuing promotion of Hellenocentrism through the national education policy discourse, the narrow focus of most circulars about I.E. on 'other-language-speaking' pupils, the absence of resources for the promotion of I.E., the composition of the pupil population, and, possibly external control by the school inspector and the predominantly middle-to-high SES Greek-Cypriot parents, who were actively involved in school life, did not seem to assist her in imagining alternative possibilities. Strict adherence to the MoEC's policies and guidelines resulted in the whole-school promotion of the conflicting ideologies of, on the one hand, ethnic nationalism and Eurocentrism and, on the other hand, interculturalism through the school action plans. Empathy, acceptance of, and respect for, cultural diversity were promoted, with an emphasis on the European culture. At the same time, 'othering' discourses about the non-European Other were promoted, demonizing the 'Turks' and inferiorizing the 'Africans'.

Taken-for-granted assumptions about the homogeneity of the pupil population and depoliticized understandings of I.E. prevailing among members of the school leadership team sustained the peripheralization of I.E. in the school agenda and left its promotion up to each teacher's willingness. Although some teachers slightly differentiated their practices from the whole school approach to cultural diversity issues, the collective engagement of the whole school community in the implementation of the school action plans, teachers' oscillation between competing discourses about cultural diversity and I.E. and limited or no understanding of power and social justice issues seemed to limit possible constructions of I.E. Although, according to the MoEC (2010), the new curriculum provided teachers with space to exercise their pedagogical autonomy to promote learning for all pupils, the absence of space at the school level to develop a coherent philosophy of education and engage with policies and other cognitive resources and develop theoretically-informed, equity-oriented school policies and

practices further constrained the teachers' agency in taking I.E. forward and resulted in their heavy reliance on the textbook. Time pressure to cover the overloaded and demanding curriculum was perceived as leaving them limited space for transformative action. As a result, echoing the contradictory institutional discourses about cultural diversity, most teachers promoted contradictory messages about cultural diversity at the classroom level. Moreover, the teachers' taken-for-granted assumptions about their respect for their pupils and limited understanding of bilingualism further inhibited their reflection on their practices to ensure the inclusion of bilingual and / or bicultural pupils' diverse knowledges and to address the learning difficulties that, as they suggested, most bilingual pupils in their classes faced.

Bicultural children in this school were included in friendship groups and seemed to feel confident about their difference. Nevertheless, lesson and break observations showed that they did not draw upon their diverse linguistic or cultural capitals, unless they were given the space to do so by their teachers, namely in the English language sessions and one-off events that celebrated diversity. Although the limited time of my fieldwork does not allow for generalisations, it could be suggested that the absence of systematic efforts to include diverse voices and knowledges at the school and classroom level and the largely monolingual and Hellenocentric curriculum limited these children's options about which capital to mobilise. Furthermore, many Greek-Cypriot and bicultural children reproduced the contradictory discourses about cultural diversity promoted at the school and classroom level. Although the pupils exhibited an awareness of the existence of racism in Greek-Cypriot schools and many of them expressed their opposition to racism, and respect and empathy for the Other, their reproduction of negative stereotypes about the Turks and black African people raises doubts as to whether they would accept and respect all Others as fully human, as peers in social life.

CHAPTER 8: CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Having presented and discussed the findings in each of the three case study schools in the three previous chapters, this chapter outlines the findings from the cross-case analysis and critically discusses the ideas that emerged from the cross-case comparison.

The cross-case analysis took place in two stages. The first stage involved comparing and contrasting the findings from the three schools horizontally, namely in relation to each of the five themes that had emerged from the analysis of the case study data. This stage allowed me to identify similarities and differences across schools regarding each theme. For example, it revealed similarities and differences regarding the three headteachers' conceptualisations and operationalisations of intercultural education and their leadership styles. The second stage involved comparing and contrasting the findings from the first stage of the cross-case analysis vertically, namely across themes. This stage revealed the interplay of the various themes. For example, it cast light on the interplay between the headteachers' leadership styles and the teachers' agency in relation to intercultural education.

This chapter is divided into two parts, which correspond to the two stages of the cross-case analysis. The first part summarises the key findings from the first stage and is structured around the five original themes from the case studies. In the second part, I have used refined themes, which reflect issues that emerged from the second stage of the cross-case analysis, to present and critically discuss the findings and consider their implications for constructions of intercultural education in Greek-Cypriot state primary schools. As discourses, practices and interactions at the school level are inextricably linked with the institutional context and the historical and political context (Charalambous, Charalambous & Zembylas, 2013), the findings are discussed, taking into account the particularities

of the specific context in which the research participants are embedded (see Ch. 1).

PART A Constructions of Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Education across the Three Schools

8.1 School Ethos and Intercultural Education

In all schools, an ethos of care seemed to prevail, as all staff members were driven by good intentions to help their pupils. However, the extent to which efforts were made to negotiate the dominant Hellenocentric and Orthodox Christian ethos permeating the Greek-Cypriot education system and promote a more inclusive and egalitarian ethos varied across schools.

In the two mainstream schools, Aphrodite (middle to high SES, mainly Greek-Cypriot pupils (GCs)) and St Lazarus school (low to middle SES, ethnically mixed pupil population), the school environment and institutional and teachers' discourses and practices reflected the coexistence of the competing ideologies underpinning the national education policy discourse, namely interculturalism and Hellenocentrism, which, in Aphrodite school, was combined with elements of Eurocentrism. National symbols, such as the Cypriot flag, and Orthodox Christian icons in most classrooms and office areas coexisted with flags of other, mainly European, countries in the yard, the assembly hall and / or the office area. 'Othering' discourses that demonized the Turks and, in Aphrodite school, inferiorized black African people coexisted with one-off events that celebrated diversity. In Aphrodite school, the emphasis on Europe reflected by the decoration and the school's participation in a Comenius programme further reinforced the misrecognition of the non-European Other. Hence, certain identities were 'othered', others were exoticised and others were valorized, while the curriculum

remained predominantly Hellenocentric and Orthodox Christian-centred, as several teachers across schools argued.

Although the head teachers reported that efforts were made to eliminate discrimination, the cultural diversity characterizing the pupil population was treated as largely invisible in everyday school life. For instance, in Aphrodite school, whole-school efforts were made to foster the pupils' acceptance of, and respect for, difference and to raise their awareness of racism and bullying within the framework of the anti-bullying school action plan. Nevertheless, the prevailing assumption that the pupil population was homogeneous led to the notion of I.E. being unnecessary, as cultural diversity was not acknowledged as a legitimate part of the lived experience of the school. Thus, cultural diversity was rendered an absent presence. Similarly, in St Lazarus school, efforts were made to avoid discrimination, by treating all pupils in the same way. However, viewing and / or treating pupils as a homogeneous group resulted in the absence of measures to recognize and include diverse knowledges and experiences and to address institutional discrimination and educational inequities in both schools.

The absence of space at the school level for staff members to develop a clear and coherent philosophy of education, a shared understanding of, and approach to, intercultural education and relevant policies to guide their practices resulted in most teachers' mainly ad hoc, inconsistent and often contradictory practices in relation to cultural diversity at the classroom level. For instance, in Aphrodite school, while some teachers occasionally tried to include the diverse cultural or linguistic capital of bilingual and / or bicultural children in the lesson, others treated all pupils in the same way and were not sure which of their pupils were bilingual and / or bicultural. Similarly, in St Lazarus school, while linguistic diversity was treated as an asset in some classes, it was exoticised and marginalised in others. In some cases, contradictions were noted even within the same teacher's practices. For example, in some classes in both schools, the 'us' versus 'them' discourse was reproduced mainly in relation to the Turks, while efforts were made to foster respect for difference and to raise pupils' awareness of racism and bullying and how to deal with them. Most teachers' narrow focus on

the instrumental purposes of education and an understanding of their role as transmitters of knowledge and culture did not seem to assist them in imagining and engaging with alternative practices that could recognize and include diverse knowledges and experiences in the learning process. In each school, one of the participant teachers, who had extensive personal and professional experiences of diversity or embodied diversity and showed a reflective and reflexive disposition, made efforts to negotiate the dominant Hellenocentric ethos. However, their efforts were restricted by their institutional context and the traditionally centralized education system.

In the ZEP school (very low to middle SES, mainly migrant pupils), the greater autonomy provided by the MoEC and the head teacher to the teachers to determine how to respond best to their multiply disadvantaged pupils provided teachers with the space to collectively engage with the hegemonic discourses regarding cultural diversity, the curriculum and their practices. Exhibiting an understanding of the moral purposes of education and driven by the common concern to respond best to their pupils, the ZEP teachers made efforts to negotiate the dominant ethos in the education system, as reflected by the school decoration and institutional and teachers' discourses and practices. For example, adjustments were made to national commemorative events to avoid the reproduction of negative stereotypes of the Other and the binary divide of 'us' and 'them'. These events were described by the head teacher as '*adapted to the children's distinctive features*', providing space for the inclusion of ethnically diverse pupils' knowledges. Furthermore, in some of the classes, there were no religious icons and no morning prayer was said in recognition of, and respect for, the religious diversity in the pupil population. However, the efforts mainly focused on the 'protective mediation' (Osborn et al., 2000) of the curriculum and the Ministry's policies, while the inclusion of the children's diverse knowledges and experiences seemed to be restricted to the school decoration, school celebrations and individual teachers' practices. As in the mainstream schools, the absence of a school vision and school policies related to intercultural education often resulted in contradictory practices at the classroom level. For example, while some teachers treated the newcomers' home languages as a tool to enable the children to acquire the Greek language, others viewed them

as a barrier to communication and to Greek language learning and did not allow their use in class. As in the mainstream schools, contradictions were also noted within the same teacher's practices. For example, incidents of bullying were sometimes addressed, while, other times, they were left unaddressed. Most teachers' ad hoc, inconsistent and contradictory practices reflected the cognitive dissonance they experienced, oscillating between contradictory beliefs and values in relation to I.E., and resulted in giving pupils contradictory messages about cultural diversity.

In all schools, including Aphrodite school, where efforts were made to promote a democratic ethos, the absence of or limited measures to remove potential barriers to the participation of working class and / or minority ethnic parents in the parents' council and generally, their involvement in their children's education, left the absence or limited representation of their voices in the school decision-making processes unchallenged. Similarly, the pupil council in both St Lazarus and the ZEP school had a symbolic role. Despite the active role of the pupil council in Aphrodite school, the extent to which bilingual and/or bicultural children were represented is questionable, as most of these children were presented by the teachers as having learning '*difficulties*', low self-esteem and / or their participation in class appeared to be limited. In the ZEP school, individual teachers were found to listen to and respond to their pupils' needs, when these were expressed. It could be suggested that the smaller class sizes in the ZEP school, especially compared to Aphrodite school, facilitated the ZEP teachers' active listening to their pupils' voices. However, the absence of a systematic whole school approach to include diverse voices, knowledges and experiences in school life and in the learning process in all three schools did not assist staff members in developing consistent, inclusive, justice- and equity-oriented practices and resulted in the promotion of contradictory beliefs and values regarding cultural diversity.

8.2 School Leadership and Intercultural Education

All headteachers were members of the dominant group, namely middle class Orthodox Christian Greek-Cypriots, and had long professional experience in the traditionally centralized and Hellenocentric Greek-Cypriot education system but limited prior experience of a high degree of diversity in schools.

Their narratives were characterized by contradictions as regards their beliefs about cultural diversity, intercultural education and their roles. For example, they expressed their empathy for working-class and / or minority ethnic parents, while, at the same time, they tended to portray them as having a low education level and being indifferent to their children's education. The head teachers constructed themselves and the teachers as agents of change who can or have to '*create the opportunities*' for intercultural education; yet, they all seemed to perceive their agency as constrained by several factors, such as the '*minimal*' support by the Ministry, which '*adopts the terminology, but, in practice, does nothing*'; the economic crisis, which entailed reduction in school funding and resources (ZEP); and the limited support by parents in St Lazarus and the ZEP school.

Feeling unsupported and uncertain about how to implement intercultural education, the head teachers implicitly or explicitly portrayed multiculturalism in schools as '*problems and stress*' and constructed intercultural education as '*[a] struggle for each school*'. The two headteachers in the schools with migrant pupils, namely the ZEP and St Lazarus school, described their role as being '*to keep a balance*', which suggests their understanding of working in a terrain of competing forces, discourses and ideologies. Possibly influenced by the MoEC's relevant circulars, which mainly focused on Greek language support for other-language-speaking pupils, the head teachers of the two mainstream schools, St Lazarus (low to middle SES, ethnically mixed) and Aphrodite school (middle to high SES, mainly GCs), viewed intercultural education as a temporary policy targeting 'other-language-speaking' pupils, which would soon be withdrawn, as many migrants left the country due to the economic crisis. They assigned intercultural education a marginal position in the school agenda either due to the belief that the

absence of relevant structural reforms restricted the school staff's agency for change (St Lazarus) or due to the taken-for-granted '*homogeneity*' of the pupil population that was believed to render I.E. only marginally relevant to the school (Aphrodite). On the other hand, the high degree of cultural diversity in the ZEP school (very low to middle SES, mainly migrants) seemed to have forced the head teacher to deal with what he described as the '*necessary evil*' of intercultural education. Viewing intercultural education as their '*daily routine*' because of the highly diverse pupil population in this school, the headteacher saw no need for '*specific rules, goals and ambitious plans*'. Without having been equipped with the tools to redefine their role and practices and to transform their leadership style from transactional to a transformational (Blair, 2002) or social justice leadership style (Theoharis, 2007), all head teachers, understandably, appeared to be reluctant to take a systematic and coordinated whole school approach to I.E.

Nevertheless, the head teachers' different leadership styles allowed for different degrees of collective and / or individual professional agency and local capacity building for intercultural education. In the two mainstream schools, despite the involvement of all staff members - and, as regards school improvement, pupils and parents in Aphrodite school - in the school decision-making processes, decisions were taken by the leadership team and they seemed unwilling to systematically engage with intercultural education at a whole school level, without having been equipped with the tools to do so. Nevertheless, the St Lazarus head teacher's justice-oriented concerns and the fact that he did not see the school practices as being strictly structured by the Ministry's guidelines provided individual teachers with some space to act as agents of change, mainly in their classrooms. In contrast, the Aphrodite head teacher's heavy reliance on the policy discourse and promotion of whole-school compliance with the Ministry's policies and guidelines seemed to limit the teachers' space for transformative action. By contrast, the distributed leadership in the ZEP school seemed to have provided the space for the development of an inclusive professional learning community, which enabled the teachers to explore discourses beyond the policy discourse and engage with the policy of intercultural education. However, the absence of a shared school vision, a shared set of values and policies to guide teachers' practices meant that the

degree of agency each teacher achieved in taking I.E. forward largely depended on their beliefs about cultural diversity and their understanding of power and social justice issues.

8.3 Teachers' Political, Historical and Sociocultural Narratives and Intercultural Education

In line with the MoEC's rhetoric, all participant teachers underlined the relevance of intercultural education. However, some teachers appeared to be ambivalent about its relevance to all schools or only to schools with other-language-speaking pupils.

At the same time, the dominant group teachers in the two mainstream schools, employed the politically, socio-culturally and institutionally sustained 'us versus them' discourse in their narratives about '*those on the other side*', the '*Turks*' – without a clear distinction between the Turks and the Turkish-Cypriots, in most cases – whom they portrayed as the enemy, as the '*barbarian*' Other. The same discourse was employed in their narratives about the migrants. In fact, the teachers who depicted the Greek-Cypriots as the victims of injustice committed by the Turks, with reference to the 1974 war and the still unresolved political conflict, tended to portray the migrants as a material or symbolic threat, while self-identifying as the victims again. This did not seem to assist them in understanding the way power operates and their privilege as members of the dominant group in Greek-Cypriot society. Their limited understanding of power and privilege narrowed their understanding of intercultural education. Moreover, the reproduction of the 'us versus them' discourse through national commemorative events and projects within the framework of the 'I don't forget' policy in these schools did not seem to assist these teachers in deconstructing the borders between 'us' and 'them'. Instead, it legitimized and allowed the space for 'othering' discourses and / or practices, which were evidenced in most classes in the two mainstream schools and were found to extend beyond the 'Turks' to other

‘othered’ groups in Greek-Cypriot society, such as black African people and Pontian Greeks.

In each of these schools, there was at least one teacher who mentioned that they tried to challenge the ‘othering’ discourse in relation to the Turks in their class. However, whether they had themselves managed to deconstruct essentialist views of identity and culture, such as the borders between ‘us’ and ‘them’, made a big difference in their approach to intercultural education. Specifically, in St Lazarus school, Georgia’s membership of an oppressed indigenous minority group and experiences of discrimination in her personal and professional life in Greek-Cypriot society had helped her develop a critical understanding of how power operates. She had an empathy for minoritized groups, including the Turkish-Cypriots, and, in her class, she affirmed and included cultural diversity and often invited her pupils to critically reflect on and deconstruct stereotypical, essentialist representations of various marginalized or othered groups in Greek-Cypriot society. On the other hand, in Aphrodite school, Panayiota, a dominant group teacher who had extensive experiences of diversity in her personal and professional life, mentioned that she did not want to transmit her racial prejudice against the Turks and the Turkish-Cypriots to her pupils and she tried not to provide a one-sided narrative about the 1974 war in her class, by exploring both sides of the story. However, the whole school emphasis on ‘I don’t forget’ did not seem to help her challenge and deconstruct the borders between ‘us’ and ‘them’ in her heart and her mind as well as in her classroom. Photos of the 1974 war were hanging on one of her classroom walls in a corner dedicated to ‘I don’t forget’, as in the other classrooms in this school. Furthermore, the cultural and linguistic diversity in her class seemed to be largely marginalized. Although bilingual and bicultural children were given the space ‘*whenever they want to say something about their country to say it*’, their bilingualism and biculturalism did not seem to be taken into account in everyday practices. In fact, she seemed to take a deficit approach, as she attributed the fact that all bilingual pupils in her class ‘*happened to have some difficulties*’ either to their ‘*cognitive capacities*’ or to the absence of ‘*pressure at home, or control*’.

Unlike the dominant group teachers in the two mainstream schools, the dominant group teachers in the ZEP school seemed to construct the borders between ‘us’ and ‘them’ as negotiable rather than rigid. For example, they portrayed the coexistence of the Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots, and possibly the Turks, as feasible under certain conditions. Moreover, they critiqued dominant discourses about migrants and the state’s approach to immigration issues. At the same time, however, they unconsciously reproduced some negative societal stereotypes about migrants, portraying them as a threat. Despite their oscillation between competing discourses and ideologies regarding cultural diversity, they exhibited a growing understanding of power inequalities in Greek-Cypriot society and a relatively critical stance towards the dominant political, historical and sociocultural narratives regarding the ‘Turks’ and the migrants. Unlike his colleagues’ ambivalence, Lambros took a consistently critical stance towards oppressive discourses and practices in the Greek-Cypriot political and sociocultural context and expressed his empathy for oppressed groups. His migrant status and lengthy exposure to the lives of disadvantaged children in his professional life seemed to have helped him develop political literacy and a critical consciousness. Consequently, unlike dominant group teachers in the mainstream schools, all ZEP teachers exhibited a growing or heightened critical consciousness. The inclusive school culture promoted by the head teacher seemed to have helped the teachers engage with hegemonic discourses about cultural diversity, including the curriculum, with their beliefs and practices. The staff meetings provided teachers with the space, time and resources for collective exploration and critical reflection on diverse perspectives, provided by critical voices in the staff, like Lambros, and their pupils, and on experiences and ideas about how to best approach the highly diverse pupil population in this school. Thus, they seemed to have helped the teachers develop their professional agency in relation to I.E.

Using the autonomy granted to them by the headteacher, the ZEP teachers were found to adjust the curriculum and their practices either in recognition of, and respect for, the cultural diversity in their classes or in response to their pupils’ reaction to oppressive discourses and practices. Differences in teachers’ understandings of I.E. and discrimination; experiences of diversity; readiness to

deconstruct their beliefs about cultural diversity; and sense of efficacy resulted in contradictions across and within teachers' practices. For instance, exhibiting a narrow, depoliticized understanding of intercultural education and limited confidence to engage with diversity issues, Dimitris (5th gr.) revised his RE teaching content and practices in response to his Muslim pupils' reaction but continued excluding his pupils' home languages from the lesson, viewing them as a barrier to their Greek language learning and communication. Unlike his colleagues, Lambros (4th gr.), like Georgia, made ongoing efforts to include minority ethnic pupils and help them develop a critical consciousness.

Consequently, teachers' life and professional histories and features of the institutional context, such as the school leadership, the school culture and the composition of the pupil population, appeared to affect the extent to which teachers engaged with the hegemonic discourses about cultural diversity in their context and adjusted their practices in response to the cultural diversity in their classes.

8.4 Teacher Agency and Intercultural Education

All staff members across schools understood intercultural education as depending on their practices. Nevertheless, the opportunities for I.E. were understood as limited despite the recent curriculum reform. Some teachers presented some subjects, such as Health Education, Greek, Geography and Religious Education, as providing the space to promote intercultural education. Moreover, some participants referred to one-off events that celebrate diversity. These examples, however, reflect 'contributions' and 'additive' approaches to cultural diversity (Banks, 2006 [1988]), which incorporate cultural elements and perspectives to the existing curriculum, while they leave power inequalities and discrimination unaddressed. The ZEP staff also referred to the highly diverse pupil population; the lenience of the inspector and the head teacher and their trust in the teachers' professionalism; the small class sizes; and the extra funding for the development

of projects at the local level to best meet their pupils' needs. These factors were presented as expanding opportunities for intercultural education in the ZEP school.

However, most teachers across schools identified several constraints to their agency in taking intercultural education forward. The most commonly cited constraint was the absence of a systematic and coordinated approach by the Ministry for the promotion of intercultural education. Most teachers complained about the absence of a coherent and clear philosophy of education and the introduction of too many, sometimes incoherent and contradictory, reforms without the teachers' relevant professional preparation. Absence of clear guidelines, limited or no relevant professional development, and absence of relevant resources combined with limited professional experience of this high degree of cultural diversity contributed to most teachers' uncertainty and anxiety about how to deal with the increasing diversity in schools. Moreover, the new curriculum was described by most teachers as very demanding and overloaded and as leaving limited or no time and space for differentiation, individualized support, and the inclusion of culturally diverse pupils' knowledges. Some teachers also described it as remaining largely Hellenocentric and Orthodox-Christian-centred. Furthermore, the teachers in the two schools with 'other-language-speaking' pupils – the ZEP and St Lazarus school – criticized the absence of a systematic and intensive approach to Greek as an additional language (GAL) teaching on the part of the Ministry. Moreover, most teachers appeared to feel alone in their efforts to promote I.E. and complained about the absence of communication between the MoEC and teachers.

Besides the absence of centralised support, some teachers underlined the absence of support by their institutional context and the wider political and sociocultural context. The absence of a whole school systematic approach to intercultural education and the limited or complete lack of involvement of working-class and / or non-Greek-Cypriot parents in their children's education were some of the challenges identified at the school level. Finally, the prevalence of Hellenocentrism and the marginalisation of alternative ideologies in their political and sociocultural context was stressed by the ZEP school teachers.

The aforementioned challenges contributed to many teachers' and head teachers' expressed feelings of powerlessness, anxiety, isolation and uncertainty about how to approach intercultural education and their belief that their agency for change was severely constrained. However, some teachers in the ZEP and St Lazarus school perceived some of the above as opportunities rather than challenges. For instance, the absence of clear guidelines regarding the implementation of I.E. and the flexibility in the new curriculum were viewed and treated as spaces for transformative action by some. Moreover, acknowledging the limitations of the GAL system and striving to meet the needs of all their pupils, some ZEP teachers attempted to include newly-arrived 'other-language-speaking' children in the lesson, by trying to help them learn Greek in class, building bridges between their mother tongue and the Greek language.

8.5 Children's Understandings, Experiences of, and Responses to Cultural Diversity

Most pupils across schools used the term cultural diversity to refer to diversity in terms of all or some of the following features: language, nationality, religion and colour. These were usually identified as markers not only of difference, but also of discrimination. Unlike the headteachers' and most teachers' beliefs that there was no racism among children, most children asserted the existence of racism in Greek-Cypriot schools and beyond, based on their experiences or their having heard about racially-prejudiced attitudes towards minority ethnic children.

Georgia's (St Lazarus) and Lambros' (ZEP) pupils and some of the pupils in Aphrodite school expressed their opposition to racism, an empathetic attitude towards bilingual and/or bicultural children and their willingness to include them in their friendship groups. This willingness was manifested by these pupils' inclusion of the minority ethnic newcomers in the ZEP and St Lazarus school and of children from mixed marriages in Aphrodite school. These pupils' views about and attitudes towards cultural diversity could relate to their teachers' efforts to raise their awareness of racism and bullying and how to deal with them. A

sophisticated understanding of racism, power inequalities and social injustices was exhibited by some of Georgia's pupils. This could relate to the teacher's persistent efforts to help her pupils develop a critical consciousness.

However, in almost all these classes, some pupils reproduced 'othering' discourses, without considering them to be racist. For instance, their '*hav[ing] done something bad to our country*' seemed to justify our not '*welcom[ing] them nicely*' (St Lazarus, 6th gr. (Georgia's class), GC). Similarly, in Aphrodite school, some pupils reproduced negative stereotypes that inferiorized – in the case of black African people – or demonized – in the case of the Turks - the Other. These discourses echoed the representations of these groups at an institutional level and – in the case of Aphrodite school – at the classroom level. This indicates the powerful impact of institutionalized 'othering' discourses on the children's constructions of certain Others, which, despite individual teachers', like Georgia's, efforts to challenge and deconstruct them in their class, seemed to be deeply ingrained in the children's minds.

However, the ways in which bilingual and / or bicultural children experienced their cultural difference varied across classes. These children in some classes, such as Georgia's (St Lazarus), Lambros' (ZEP) and Dimitris' (ZEP) and in the Aphrodite school classes, implicitly or explicitly expressed their confidence about their cultural difference and some of the children in the ZEP school even resisted oppressive practices. For instance, two 5th grade Muslim pupils in the ZEP school resisted Dimitris' original Orthodox Christian-centred RE teaching content, which he reviewed in response to his pupils' reaction. By contrast, some minority ethnic pupils in other classes in the ZEP and St Lazarus school did not seem to feel comfortable about certain aspects of their identities, such as their religion, their language or their ethnicity, and exercised their agency to dissociate themselves from them. For example, Muslim pupils in the 1st and 3rd grade in St Lazarus school joined the Orthodox Christian prayer to fit in. Although the different ways in which these children exercised their agency could be attributed to differences in the pupils' age or to the number of Muslim pupils in class, further examples, which are discussed in 8.9, suggest that the ways in which the children experienced

their difference and enacted their agency related to the status and value of the children's diverse capital in Greek-Cypriot society and to the teachers' and, by extension, the institutional discourses and practices.

As the findings of the cross-case analysis show, the coexistence of the conflicting ideologies of the long-established Hellenocentrism and the recently introduced, ill-defined and minimally supported interculturalism limited teacher agency in relation to intercultural education. Ad hoc, contradictory and inconsistent practices resulted in leaving institutional discrimination and educational inequities largely unaddressed. However, teachers' personal and professional histories and features of the institutional context, such as the school leadership, the school culture, the degree of autonomy and financial support officially granted to the school by the Ministry and the composition of the pupil population, affected the extent to which teachers achieved agency in taking intercultural education forward. In turn, the extent to which institutional and teachers' discourses and practices reproduced or challenged the unequal power relations prevailing in society was found to affect the ways in which minority ethnic children experienced their difference and responded to institutional, teachers' and peers' oppressive discourses and practices.

Having reported the findings from the horizontal cross-case analysis in part A, part B presents and critically discusses the themes that emerged from the second stage of the cross-case analysis.

PART B Discussion

Having provided a synthesis of the findings across the three schools in part A, part B discusses the key issues regarding constructions of intercultural education and cultural diversity that emerged from the cross-case analysis. Specifically, the

discussion has been structured around the following overarching themes that emerged from the cross-case analysis:

1. School leadership and engagement with intercultural education
2. Teachers' conscientization and the role of the institutional context
3. Conflicting national ideologies and professional decision-making
4. The school's role in shaping children's cultural positionings and agency at school

There is some overlap among these themes, but this is not considered to be problematic. In fact, it seems inevitable, as all the aforementioned elements were interconnected and collectively contributed to constructions of cultural diversity and intercultural education in the schools. The discussion is set against the backdrop of the wider political, historical, sociocultural and national education context in which the three case study schools are nested.

8.6 School Leadership and Engagement with Intercultural Education

Undoing inequality and achieving equity in education is a risky and uncomfortable act because we need to disrupt the way things are “normally” done. (Ng, 2003, p. 216)

The significant role of school leadership (Mirza, 2000; Blair, 2002; Copland, 2003; Gillborn & Bishop, 2011; Theoharis & O'Toole, 2011; Tarozzi, 2014), an inclusive school culture (Booth & Ainscow, 2002), and a shared school vision, values and policies (Gillborn & Mirza, 2000; Day, Harris & Hadfield, 2001; Johnson, 2003; Leeman, 2003; Huber, 2004; Barker, 2005; Gorski, 2006) has been repeatedly underlined in the literature as being key to achieving deep and sustainable school reforms. School leadership in multiethnic contexts is complex and challenging, as ‘diversity implies multiple priorities and possible contradictory demands’ (Blair, 2002, p. 190). The complex social and political realities in ethnically and / or religiously divided societies, like the one in Cyprus,

where issues of justice lie at the core of the conflict, increase the challenge and complexity involved in leading multiethnic schools (McGlynn & London, 2013; Zembylas & Iasonos, 2017).

In the Cypriot context, research on school leadership in multicultural schools (e.g. Hajisoteriou, 2010, 2012; Zembylas & Iasonos, 2010) shows the prevalence of a transactional leadership style combined with assimilatory approaches. The findings of this study show the continuing prevalence of a predominantly transactional leadership style that focuses on the smooth operation of the school and the promotion of the MoEC's agenda, despite the MoEC's urging that schools develop a school philosophy and their own intercultural education policies and action plans (see F:7.1.19.1/16, 3 September 2013). Although the head teachers in this study did not take an explicitly assimilatory approach to cultural diversity, as many headteachers in the aforementioned studies did, the '*minimal*' support in terms of professional development and resources provided to schools by the MoEC for the implementation of intercultural education and the head teachers' oscillation between the competing discourses about cultural diversity and intercultural education coexisting in the national education policy discourse did not seem to enable them to take a systematic and coherent whole-school approach to intercultural education. Nevertheless, differences in terms of the degree of autonomy the schools were provided with by the MoEC and the composition of the pupil population seem to have affected the extent to which the head teachers provided teachers with the space to engage with intercultural education in each school, as explained below.

Operating in a context characterized by countervailing forces and conflicting ideologies and discourses regarding cultural diversity, the headteachers in the ZEP (very low to middle SES, mainly migrants) and St Lazarus school (low to middle SES, ethnically mixed) described their role as being '*to keep a balance*'. The high degree of cultural diversity in the pupil population in these schools seemed to have forced these headteachers to deal with what was described as the '*necessary evil*' of intercultural education and assume the uncomfortable role of a political juggler, trying '*to keep a balance*' between the needs of their pupil population and the

conflicting demands and pressures emanating from the MoEC. In fact, although all the head teachers understood the implementation of intercultural education as depending on each school, I.E. was understood as a '*struggle for each school*' rather than as an opportunity for equity- and justice-oriented school reform. Similarly, the Greek-Cypriot head teachers who took a critical multicultural approach and exhibited elements of social justice leadership in Zembylas and Iasonos' (2017) recent research perceived their agency in relation to intercultural education as being restricted by the absence of support by the education system and its structures.

In this study, the head teachers' agency in taking I.E. forward seemed to be further restricted by the inner struggle they seemed to be experiencing. This struggle appeared to be ideological, as well as moral and emotional. Tensions between, on the one hand, justice-oriented concerns and expressions of empathy for working class, majority and minority ethnic children and their parents and, on the other hand, essentialistic, deficit constructions of these parents; between the need to '*create the opportunities*' for intercultural education and the need to respond to '*so many problems*' in the here-and-now that leave limited time and space for diversity issues, illustrate some of the contradictions in the head teachers' narratives about cultural diversity and their roles. These contradictions reflect the cognitive dissonance these head teachers experienced, faced with the unprecedented increase of cultural diversity in schools, which they had not been prepared for and supported to respond to. The head teachers' schooling experiences and long professional experience in a highly centralized and Hellenocentric education system and limited experience of, and knowledge about, intercultural education did not seem to assist them in redefining their beliefs about cultural diversity, their role and their practices. This redefinition seemed to be further undermined by the absence of a coherent philosophy of education underpinning the MoEC's recent policy reforms. The ambiguity surrounding the meaning and implementation of intercultural education in the policy discourse (Hajisoteriou & Angelides, 2013) combined with the continuing promotion of the long-established ideology of Hellenocentrism, which is underpinned by values that are contrary to interculturalism, did not seem to encourage the disruption of

established ways of thinking and acting. Instead, these contradictions in the policy discourse, the limited, if any, professional development provided to Greek-Cypriot head teachers to deal with cultural diversity in schools (Zembylas & Iasonos, 2010, 2017) and the absence of deep systemic changes that could enable equity-oriented school reform seemed to have contributed to the head teachers' expressed sense of powerlessness, low confidence and uncertainty about how to implement intercultural education.

Without having been equipped with the tools to move from a transactional to a transformational (Blair, 2002) or social justice leadership style (Theoharis, 2007), the head teachers in the two mainstream schools, St Lazarus (low to middle SES, ethnically mixed) and Aphrodite school (middle to high SES, mainly GCs), assigned intercultural education a peripheral position in the school agenda. This appeared to be understood as justified on the grounds of the peripheral position of intercultural education in the national education agenda: *'if something is institutionalized, you follow it, while if they leave it, like now, there is a lot of indifference'* (Athanasia, Aphrodite). Although both head teachers were driven by a moral vision, namely *'the provision of education for all children'* (St Lazarus) and *'happiness', 'learning' and 'creativity'* for the whole school community (Aphrodite), and presented the elimination of discrimination as their *'daily routine'*, their narrow understanding of discrimination and intercultural education and their long professional experience in a system with a top-down approach to change seemed to limit their ability to imagine alternative possibilities, which could enable them to locally develop their and the staff's capacity to take intercultural education forward.

Neither of these schools made systematic efforts to include diverse voices in school life and in the decision-making processes, as illustrated by the absence of non-Greek-Cypriot parents in the parents' council in Aphrodite school and the limited involvement of parents in St Lazarus school. This seems problematic, as the involvement of parents seems to be key, particularly, in relation to issues of inclusion and performance. The significance of home-school relations has been repeatedly underlined in the literature in relation to the children's performance

(Gillborn & Mirza, 2000; Learning and Teaching Scotland, 2005; Heckmann, 2008) and to building a culturally responsive school ethos (Johnson, 2003), ‘an ethos conducive to a socially just school’ (Mitchell, 2012, p. 23). Treating parents as equal stakeholders in the school community could assist teachers in moving beyond their cultural assumptions and opening themselves up to alternative possibilities of thinking and acting, and, thus, in developing cross-cultural understanding (Johnson, 2003). Similarly, the marginal position of the pupil council in St Lazarus school and the absence of monitoring measures to ensure the participation of bilingual and / or bicultural children in the Aphrodite school pupil council limited head teachers’ and teachers’ opportunities to gain an insight into their bicultural / bilingual pupils’ schooling experiences, needs, interests and difficulties that could enable staff members to identify areas for equity- and justice-oriented reform. As children are ‘expert witnesses’ of teaching, learning and school life (Busher, 2012, p. 113), the systematic inclusion of all children’s voices in school decision-making processes could have provided valuable insights into their educational experiences and their diverse needs and interests, as plenty of research in pupils’ perspectives has shown (e.g. Phelan, Davidson and Cao, 1992; Rudduck, Chaplain & Wallace, 1996; McIntyre, 2004; McCluskey et al., 2013).

Besides not mobilizing culturally diverse pupils’ and parents’ knowledges for local capacity building for equity-oriented change, the prevailing hierarchical culture in these schools and the head teachers’ transactional leadership style did not seem to provide space for teachers’ collective engagement with policies and their underpinning ideologies, or for the local development of a coherent philosophy of education and policies to guide teachers’ practices. In fact, in St Lazarus school, the marginalization of Georgia’s, the Maronite teacher’s, voice at the school level suggests that there was no or limited space for alternative perspectives, as regards educational and ideological issues. Similarly, the Aphrodite school action plans that mainly aimed at the implementation of the MoEC’s educational objectives promoted whole-school compliance with the MoEC’s agenda and left limited space for alternative courses of action.

In both schools, institutional discourses and practices appeared to reproduce the conflicting ideologies coexisting in the policy discourse. Lacking the space to develop a shared understanding of, and approach to, intercultural education and thus, to collectively develop their capacity to deal with the uncertainty, the risks and complexities involved in promoting intercultural education, most teachers in these schools expressed their feelings of isolation and of being powerless to engage with intercultural education. This did not seem to help them to move beyond isolated, fragmented, simplistic and ad hoc intercultural practices. These findings are in line with those of Priestley, Biesta and Robinson's (2012) findings in their research on teacher agency and curriculum reform in two Scottish high schools, where the vertical, hierarchical relationships at one of the participant schools appeared to be disabling teachers and restricting their achievement of agency.

By contrast, the greater degree of autonomy granted to the ZEP school (very low to middle SES, mainly migrants) by the MoEC, so that teachers can locally determine how to best respond to the highly diverse pupil population in this school, appeared to have enabled the ZEP school head teacher to deal with the uncertainty about how to approach I.E. and the juggling of the competing pressures and demands by relying on the experience and knowledge of the staff members. Horizontal and reciprocal relationships enabled by the head teacher's trust in the teachers' professionalism and his rationale: '*Do whatever you think is best. I won't intervene, for example, to forbid something*' seemed to have contributed to the creation of an inclusive culture of openness, dialogue, trust and collegiality among the staff members and the development of a professional learning community within the school. The staff meetings, which provided space for the teachers to openly discuss and exchange views about how to approach contentious issues, such as the Orthodox Christian morning prayer and the 'I don't forget' policy, and how to deal with the common challenge of the high diversity in their school, seemed to provide capacity building opportunities for all staff members. The inclusion of, and respect for, critical voices, like Lambros', gave the opportunity for staff members to expose themselves to diverse perspectives, expand their thinking, potentially challenge misconceptions, critically engage with the

curriculum and the Ministry's policies and guidelines and consider alternative courses of action. This space for generative and reflexive dialogue, the value of which for empowerment and transformative action has been repeatedly underscored in the literature (e.g. Donnelly, 2004; Collier, 2006; Zembylas, Charalambous & Charalambous, 2011; Priestley, Biesta & Robinson, 2012), seemed to have enabled these teachers' collective professional agency for change. Being driven by the common purpose of responding best to their minority ethnic pupils rather than to the demands of the system and empowered through the distribution of leadership and the inclusive culture, the teachers in this school seemed to feel more comfortable and safer to be creative and experiment with practices that deviated from the Ministry's policies and guidelines than the teachers in the other two schools. Even teachers who expressed their low confidence in taking I.E. forward adjusted their teaching content and practices in response to their pupils' resistance to their practices. Consequently, the collaborative relations of power among staff members and their collective engagement with I.E., which was considered by all staff members as the appropriate approach in this school, enabled them to achieve a higher degree of agency compared to their colleagues in the other two schools. These findings are in line with the widely expressed argument that relationships of collegiality, collaboration, mutual respect and trust can assist teachers in developing powerful professional agency (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Helsby, 1999; Sachs, 2003; Robinson, 2012; see Pantić, 2015).

However, the findings of the present study show that a distributed style of leadership and horizontal relationships of trust and collaboration are not in themselves sufficient to enable equity- and justice-oriented school reform. Absence of a shared school vision grounded in social justice and equity and school policies related to I.E. often resulted in ad hoc, inconsistent and, in some cases, contradictory practices in the ZEP school, too, which gave children contradictory messages about cultural diversity. The realities of the political and sociocultural context of the school seem to make the development of official school policy for intercultural education challenging (Zembylas, 2010c). Nevertheless, focused and clear school policies to guide school practices are necessary for the development

of a commitment to equity and social justice (Gillborn & Mirza, 2000), the creation of a culturally responsive school ethos (Johnson, 2003) and the promotion of intercultural education at an institutional level (Leeman, 2003; Gorski, 2006).

To sum up, the redefinition of the head teachers' role and practices in relation to intercultural education in the recent policy reforms does not seem to have been accompanied by policies that address the existing cultures and structures in schools to enable head teachers to imagine and engage with a political, transformative approach to I.E. Thus, without centralized support for change, intercultural education appeared to be understood as a 'risky and uncomfortable' venture for a sole school leader or even a small leadership team to undertake in the ethnically divided and economic crisis-struck Greek-Cypriot society. Zembylas and Iasonos' (2017) research reveals that there are Greek-Cypriot head teachers who are committed to social justice and strive through their everyday leadership to 'create 'small openings' or 'cracks' (Zembylas, 2008) that raise new prospects framed in social justice terms', despite the adverse political conditions (p. 20). However, the percentage of such head teachers seems to be small compared to Greek-Cypriot head teachers who adopt assimilatory discourses and practices (Zembylas & Iasonos, 2010; Hajisoteriou, 2012). The findings of the present study suggest that distributed leadership and an inclusive school culture might offer a useful alternative to more traditional styles of leadership, such as a single leadership style, and a hierarchical culture. Distributed leadership allows sharing power, responsibility, knowledge as well as the risk and discomfort involved in disrupting established ways of thinking and acting shaped by a traditionally ethnocentric education system. Thus, it can enable engagement with intercultural education. As Sachs (2003) notes, '[t]rust, engagement and collaborative action, when combined [can] lead to transformative politics.' However, echoing Blair's (2002) suggestion that leadership in multiethnic schools needs to achieve a balance between democratic and, if necessary, autocratic approaches, the findings of the present study underline the need for a balance between a laissez-faire approach to leadership and a rigid hierarchical culture. A commonly shared political, transformative vision, shared values to guide school

policies and practice, and monitoring mechanisms to ensure coherent practices seem to be necessary to enable and sustain equity-oriented school reform.

8.7 Teachers' Conscientization and the Role of the Institutional Context

If the concept of border pedagogy is to be linked to the imperatives of a critical democracy, as it must, it is important that educators possess a theoretical grasp of the ways in which difference is constructed through various representations and practices that name, legitimate, marginalize, and exclude the cultural capital and voices of subordinate groups in ... society. (Giroux, 2016 [2006] p. 59)

Several scholars in the fields of intercultural, multicultural and anti-racist education have underscored the importance of a theoretical understanding of the ways in which power and privilege operate for the development of teaching practices that are grounded in equity and social justice (Villegas and Lucas, 2002; Leeman and Ledoux, 2005; Gorski, 2006; Giroux, 2016 [2006]; Arshad, 2017). The findings of this study confirm the key role that teachers' 'conscientização' (conscientization) (Freire, 1973 [1969]) plays in shaping their approach to intercultural education. In other words, teachers' engagement with intercultural education was found to be affected by the degree of their understanding of the ways in which power and discrimination operate and of the role that schools and teachers can play, by reproducing or challenging, deconstructing and transforming narratives, discourses and practices that sustain power inequalities and social injustices.

As suggested by numerous scholars (e.g. Aaronsohn, Carter & Howell, 1995; Pohan, 1996; Johnson, 2002; Garmon, 2004; Mahon, 2006; Kyles & Olafson, 2008; Arshad, 2012), the teachers' life histories were found to have largely shaped their beliefs about cultural diversity and relevant practices and the extent to which these reproduced, or challenged, hegemonic discourses about cultural diversity. Specifically, teachers whose status as both an insider and outsider in Greek-Cypriot society, life and professional experiences and reflective and reflexive

disposition had enabled them to develop political literacy were critical of the oppression of minoritized groups in the Greek-Cypriot education system and society and expressed their empathy for, and advocacy of, the Other, which was also evidenced in their practices at the school and classroom level. Acting as allies of their minority ethnic pupils, they tried to contribute to disrupting oppression, by promoting inclusive practices, challenging oppressive institutional discourses and practices, and empowering their pupils to cross and transform the socially constructed borders of 'us' and 'them' through their border pedagogy.

Lacking similar life and professional experiences, most dominant group teachers, namely middle class Orthodox Christian Greek-Cypriot teachers, exhibited limited understanding of their privilege and of the ways in which power operates. This limited understanding of the privilege that their dominant group membership afforded them and of the workings of power is common among dominant group members (McIntosh, 1990; Aveling, 2006; Lander, 2011; Pratto & Stewart, 2012). This has been attributed to factors, such as the greater availability of the lives of dominant group members than those of members of subordinated groups, which implies that dominant group members lack the social comparison information to identify disadvantage, discrimination and prejudice, which they themselves do not experience (see Pratto & Stewart, 2012). In my research context, the prevalence of the unilateral victimhood narrative in relation to the conflict, which constructs the collective Self as the victim of injustice and human rights violations committed by the barbaric ethnic Other, the Turks, (Hajisoteriou, 2012) appeared to further impede most dominant group teachers' understanding of power and social justice issues. Many teachers' identification of the ethnic Self as the victim of the primary ethnic Other - the Turks - and of the migrants, who seemed to be understood as the new Other, seems highly problematic. This self-identification did not seem to assist them in understanding their implication in the perpetuation of social injustices and power inequalities. As Trimikliniotis and Demetriou (2011) note: 'The racism debate with migrants at the receiving end and Greek-Cypriots as the perpetrators d[oes] not 'fit in' the national story of victimisation of Greek-Cypriots' (p. 24).

However, the findings of the cross-case analysis revealed that certain features of the institutional context, such as the degree of autonomy granted to the school by the MoEC, the school leadership, the school culture, including institutional discourses about cultural diversity, and the composition of the pupil population and the prevailing assumptions about it, enabled or constrained teachers' 'conscientization'. Having discussed the impact of the school leadership and the existence of a hierarchical or inclusive school culture on teachers' engagement with intercultural education in the previous section, this section focuses mainly on the ways in which institutional discourses about cultural diversity and the composition of the pupil population can facilitate or impede teachers' development of a critical consciousness.

In the mainstream schools, the reproduction of the conflict discourse through the national commemorative events and the activities within the framework of the MoEC-defined objective of 'I don't forget' reinforced rather than challenged the binary divide between 'us' and 'them'. By creating and recreating collective memories of the war and the occupied areas (Christou, 2007; Charalambous, Charalambous & Zembylas, 2014), these activities reproduced and sustained the sense of injustice and unilateral victimhood. The negative, essentialist images of Turks reproduced through the aforementioned events and activities did not seem to enable dominant group teachers to engage with their deeply ingrained prejudice about the 'Turks', which, as the teachers mentioned, they had developed through personal or family experiences of the 1974 war, their own schooling experiences and their daily experiences of the ongoing conflict in their everyday lives.

The deconstruction of the dominant narrative about the conflict and the essentialistic understandings of the primary ethnic Other and the redefinition of the relation between the ethnic Self and the primary ethnic Other seem key to the redefinition of the relation between the ethnic Self and the new ethnic Other, which seemed to be constructed by analogy. This process of deconstruction and transformation of deeply-ingrained beliefs, attitudes and emotions regarding the conflict and the primary and the new ethnic Other seems to require 'multiperspectivity, de-essentialisation, criticality and reflexivity' (Zembylas,

Charalambous & Charalambous, 2011, pp. 33-34). Critical dialogue can provide the space for teachers to engage with multiple perspectives and relativise their objectivity and absolute truth, acknowledging their groundedness in political interests and social experiences (ibid.). This can help teachers to interrogate their own views and ideological assumptions and reflect on their impact on their practices (ibid). Based on her research in an integrated school in the religiously divided context of Northern Ireland, Donnelly (2004) argues that unless teachers are provided with the time and space to develop a critical understanding of their own beliefs, values and assumptions, then schools are likely to merely reinforce the psychological barriers which perpetuate the division. In contrast, critical dialogue can assist teachers in developing a critical consciousness (Freire, 1973 [1969]).

However, the centralised education system and its limited support for intercultural education; the hierarchical culture in the mainstream schools; the headteachers' sense of limited agency in relation to intercultural education; and the peripheralization of I.E. in the school agenda seemed to restrict the space for staff members to engage in this critical dialogue and potential deconstruction of their deeply internalised stereotypes and beliefs about the primary and the new Other and to develop an understanding of how power and privilege operate. Instead, othering discourses at the institutional level extended to other stigmatised groups in Greek-Cypriot society, such as black African people. Furthermore, the exoticization of different cultures through one-off or temporary events that celebrated diversity in these schools seemed to also risk contributing to the essentialization, trivialization and reification of different group identities (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997; Fraser, 2000). Moreover, taken-for-granted assumptions about the homogeneity of the pupil population or deficit views of working-class majority and minority ethnic parents and pupils contributed to the sustenance of the marginalization of diverse knowledges and voices in school life and in the learning process and further inhibited the teachers' understanding of power and social justice issues. This limited understanding did not assist teachers in moving beyond the incorporation of intercultural education to their existing

practices, leaving institutional discrimination and educational inequities unaddressed.

The ZEP school seemed to provide space for teachers' critical dialogue with the world and with others. The fact that only three out of the 81 low SES pupils in this school were Greek-Cypriots, while the vast majority were migrants mainly from Eastern Europe and fewer were children from mixed marriages *'forces you to be intercultural. It doesn't let you do anything else'*, as one of the dominant group teachers mentioned. The prevailing belief that intercultural education was the appropriate approach and the whole school efforts to mediate the Hellenocentric and Orthodox Christian-centred ethos underpinning the Greek-Cypriot education system, in recognition of, and respect for, the highly diverse pupil population in this school appeared to have contributed to providing the space for the teachers' engagement with dominant discourses about cultural diversity, with the curriculum and with multiple perspectives and alternative worldviews provided by the children and by colleagues with different positionings.

Granted with the symbolic space by the MoEC and the head teacher and faced with the common challenge to respond to the high degree of diversity in their school, the ZEP teachers appeared to be open to all sources of knowledge, including their pupils, with whom they were found to negotiate their teaching content and practices. Their daily immersion into this borderland provided them with an insight into the lived experiences of their multiply disadvantaged pupils and thus, into the workings of power in Greek-Cypriot society. The small class sizes and the teachers' willingness to cross the borders between 'us' – the middle class, Greek-Cypriot adults – and 'them' – the working-class, migrant children – seemed to have assisted the teachers in realizing the complexities of their pupils' identities and lived experiences and thus, in 'break[ing] the essentialist illusion of Other' (Gillborn, 2004; Holliday, 2011, p. 85). Their daily exposure to the lives of their disadvantaged pupils; the institutional discourses about cultural diversity, which reflected an effort to recognize and respect their minority ethnic pupils to the extent allowed by the system; and the space teachers were provided with for collective reflection on these experiences and on their approach to diversity issues

at the staff meetings seemed to have assisted them in engaging in a process of gradual deconstruction of the dominant discourses and narratives about the conflict and the primary and the new Other. This was manifested by the ZEP dominant group teachers' more open stance to the possibility of coexistence with the Turkish-Cypriots, and possibly the Turks; their critique of the Greek-Cypriot state's, society's and the MoEC's approach to migrants; and their reported adjustments to their practices in recognition of, and respect for, their minority ethnic pupils, which suggested that these teachers were probably going through a process of conscientization.

In conclusion, although teachers' life and professional histories appeared to play a key role in shaping their beliefs about cultural diversity and their practices, certain features of the institutional context, such as the school leadership, the school culture, encompassing institutional discourses about cultural diversity, and the composition of the pupil population and the prevailing assumptions about it, appeared to restrict or expand opportunities for teachers to challenge and potentially deconstruct the dominant institutionalized narratives and discourses that seemed to sustain and reinforce hierarchies of superiority and inferiority. By limiting or expanding the teachers' opportunities for dialogue with the policy discourse, their colleagues, their pupils, their empirical reality and their deeply internalized beliefs about the Other, the school seemed to inhibit or facilitate the teachers' conscientization.

The example of the ZEP school shows that more funding and greater autonomy officially granted to the school by the MoEC; a distributed style of leadership and collaborative relations of power among staff members; the negotiation of the dominant ethos and dominant discourses at the institutional level; the prevailing belief that intercultural education is the appropriate educational approach; and the high degree of diversity in the pupil population may enable teachers' engagement in a process of conscientization and, thus, deeper engagement with I.E. Nevertheless, the absence of a systematic and coordinated, whole school approach to I.E., involving the staff's collective engagement with cognitive resources that could enable them to develop a shared theoretically-informed understanding of

I.E., power and social justice issues restricted the teachers' capacity to develop coherent and consistent approaches to cultural diversity. This suggests that 'knowledge – *in* – practice' (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999), namely knowledge based on teachers' reflection on practice, does not suffice for political, transformative action. As suggested by several scholars (e.g. Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Leeman & Ledoux, 2005; Gorski, 2006; Giroux, 2016 [2006]; Arshad, 2017), a theoretical understanding of the ways in which power and privilege operate combined with practice might enable dominant group teachers to move beyond the oscillation between competing ideologies, beliefs and values, deconstruct their deeply ingrained beliefs about certain Others and develop consistent equity-oriented practices.

As teachers' personal beliefs and values play a key role in the value transmission process that takes place through schooling (Donnelly, 2004) and affect teachers' practices and interactions with their pupils (Pajares, 1992; Gibson, 1998; Sercu, García & Prieto, 2005; Turner, Christensen & Meyer, 2009; Llurda & Lasagabaster, 2010), it seems of utmost significance for schools to provide teachers with the time and space for focused, generative, reflexive and theory-informed dialogue about education policy and practice and to engage with contested issues related to the conflict, cultural diversity, power, discrimination and social justice, with a view to developing equity-oriented practices. The creation of 'inquiry communities' (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999) in schools that allow teachers' engagement with both theory and practice could assist them in moving beyond the current fragmented and ad hoc practices in relation to cultural diversity and locally develop their capacity for equity-oriented practices.

The findings also support Charalambous, Charalambous and Zembylas' (2013) argument that 'taking into account the negative representations of 'Turks' in Greek-Cypriot schools and the Greek-Cypriot society in general...it is important to firstly restore the human dimensions of Greek-Cypriots' national 'other' as an entry point to peace ideas' (p. 82). Casting light on the interconnectedness of the teachers' beliefs about the primary Other and their beliefs about the new Other, the findings of the present study extend this argument, suggesting that the

restoration of the primary Other to their full humanity may be significant not only for the promotion of peace through education but also for the contribution of education to building a more socially just society that recognises and respects otherness. Social justice may also assist in the achievement of peace, as it is through social justice, through the recognition of the Other as fully human, as peer, that trust, interconnectedness and empathy can be built, which seem to be key to the achievement of peace.

8.8 Conflicting Ideologies at the National Education Level & Local Professional Decision-Making

A common debate in the field of education policy worldwide is whether to expand or reduce opportunities for teachers' professional decision making at the local level through the devolution of power to the schools or greater central control (Biesta et al., 2015). In Cyprus, efforts have been made to devolve power to the schools and the teachers through the introduction of the new curriculum in 2010. Being part of the wider educational reform efforts, which aim at transforming the so far 'helleno-cyprio-centric, narrowly ethnocentric and culturally monolithic' education system (Educational Reform Committee, 2004, p. 95) and creating a 'democratic and humane' school, the new curriculum seems to have opened up opportunities for teachers to act as agents of change. According to the MoEC (2010), teachers are provided with the autonomy to design differentiated teaching to ensure the learning of all pupils. Hence, this reform seems to have created favourable conditions for the development of intercultural practices grounded in social justice and equity both at the school and at the classroom level.

However, the MoEC's continuing promotion of the long-established ideology of Hellenocentrism seems to limit the space for school staff to envision and enact alternative ways of thinking and acting. The participant staff members identified several factors that were understood as constraining their agency in taking intercultural education forward. These factors mainly focused on the absence of support for I.E. by the MoEC. The teachers also referred to the absence of support

by their institutional, political and sociocultural context (see 8.4 for a detailed discussion). Both teachers and head teachers expressed feelings of isolation and uncertainty about how to approach I.E. This uncertainty and their struggle to reconcile the conflicting ideologies and values regarding multiculturalism coexisting in the national education policy discourse was reflected at the institutional and, in most cases, at the classroom level, resulting in the transmission of contradictory beliefs and values regarding cultural diversity.

Given the wider geopolitical, sociocultural and historical context, which legitimises and reinforces ethnic nationalism due to the ongoing conflict, the absence of a clear and coherent philosophy of education underpinning the MoEC's policies and reforms seemed to severely restrict the teachers' potential to challenge and deconstruct the long-established Hellenocentrism and Orthodox Christian-centredness permeating the education system. Having received their own education after the 1974 war in a monocultural, Hellenocentric and Orthodox Christian-centred system and having had limited experiences of diversity in schools and no experiences of discrimination, most dominant group teachers appeared to have deeply internalised the dominant discourses about the Other and exhibited a limited understanding of how power operates. The fact that they had been working in a highly centralised system for years, which prescribed the knowledge to be transmitted through the national curriculum, did not seem to have helped most of them to develop an understanding of the social construction and political groundedness of knowledge, history and collective memories and to engage with the curriculum and the Ministry's policies. Moreover, the ambiguity surrounding the meaning of I.E. in the policy discourse and the fact that the school staff had received little or no relevant professional development and resources seemed to further constrain their transformative potential. Hence, despite the Ministry's efforts to devolve more power to the schools and the teachers for professional decision-making through the new curriculum, the coexistence of the long-established ideology of Hellenocentrism with the recently introduced and vaguely defined ideology of interculturalism in the policy discourse did not seem to enable schools and teachers to challenge and deconstruct oppressive discourses and structures and disrupt established monocultural practices, which retained their

legitimacy within the new curriculum and in the wider political, sociocultural and historical context. As Zembylas, Charalambous and Charalambous (2011) note, the established dominance of Hellenocentrism in the field of education leaves limited space for alternative discourses. As a result, the implementation of intercultural education was understood as a '*struggle*' both by teachers and head teachers. The absence of space at the institutional level for teachers to develop a clear and coherent philosophy of education and a shared understanding of, and approach to, intercultural education to guide their practices further disempowered them in taking I.E. forward. Most teachers resorted to 'satisficing strategies' (Ball, 2006), in response to the tension between the conflicting ideologies within the system and the pressure to cover the curriculum. These 'satisficing strategies' involved practices that emphasised sameness and treated difference as invisible or celebrated diversity and left the marginalisation of diverse knowledges unaddressed.

The few teachers with culturally diverse life and professional histories were able to develop a critical understanding of how power and privilege operate and a commitment to social justice and equity. Regardless of the school context in which they worked, these teachers built a collaborative culture in their classes; made conscious and ongoing efforts to include all their pupils in their lessons, treating cultural diversity as an asset; and tried to help their pupils develop a critical consciousness. Acting as 'activist professionals' (Sachs, 2003; Hayes et al, 2006), these teachers challenged the dominant discourses about the Other and tried to promote justice-oriented practices both in their classroom and at the school level. However, their efforts received different responses at the school level, depending on the school leadership, the school culture and the school profile. Furthermore, even these teachers argued that possible constructions of intercultural education were delimited by the structures of the centralised education system and the political context.

Giving schools and teachers space to collaborate, engage with policies and the curriculum and develop collective professional agency seems essential to enable them to respond to their local needs and to the challenges they face. However, this

does not seem to be sufficient for the deep cultural and structural changes needed for greater equity in education. Given the adverse political, historical and sociocultural context in which these schools operate, it seems important for the Ministry to develop a clear philosophy of education underpinned by a coherent set of values, such as equity, social justice and respect for difference, and review its current policies to ensure that they are underpinned by the same, rather than contradictory, values regarding cultural diversity. Similarly, drawing on a two-year ethnographic research in Greek-Cypriot primary schools with an increasing number of migrant pupils and Turkish-speaking pupils, Zembylas (2010f) suggests that it is crucial to provide opportunities for school staff members to engage with and reflect on practices, considering their impact on children, so that they explore alternative possibilities. However, he argues that due to the unresolved conflict:

Without large-scale structural transformations of the educational system of which teachers are part (e.g. new curricula and educational goals; different philosophies, pedagogical practices and educational materials; political will for social change), the fact and practice of racism/nationalism/classism will go unaltered in schools. (p. 1389).

This study argues that an empowering education system that does not debilitate schools and teachers by promoting contradictory ideologies and ambiguous concepts but rather enables engagement with issues like positionalities, discrimination and intercultural education may help teachers and head teachers to move beyond the roles of deliverers of the curriculum and political jugglers and the feelings of isolation, uncertainty, confusion and powerlessness and gain the confidence to develop a powerful collective professional agency for equity and social justice in education.

8.9 The School's Role in Shaping Children's Cultural Positionings and Agency

Education is not neutral (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997; Banks, 2006; Wrigley, Arshad & Pratt, 2012). Whose knowledge is taught and whose is silenced, whose

cultural capital is recognized and whose is misrecognized through the formal and hidden curriculum reflect political decisions. Although educational structures, such as policies, the curriculum, funding and assessment, are shaped by the forces of power and thus, 'generally reflect the values and priorities of dominant groups in society, they are not by any means fixed or static' (Cummins, 2009, p. 45). Schools and individual teachers rarely have complete autonomy; nonetheless, they can still make choices regarding their approach to pupils' languages and cultures, the forms of parental and community involvement they encourage, and their practices (ibid.) and, thus, the values they promote. These choices can either contribute to creating and recreating hierarchies of superiority and inferiority and sustaining power inequalities by recognizing the capital only of certain groups, or enable border crossings and the creation of borderlands, through the creation of openings for the inclusion of the marginalized and / or subordinated Others' voices and capitals. The findings revealed that the power relations reflected in the choices made by the participant teachers and the school environment in which these were embedded, namely the composition of the pupil population, the institutional discourses about cultural diversity and the school culture, carried implications for bilingual and / or bicultural children's agency and thus, the extent to which and the ways in which they negotiated their cultural positionings in school.

Children tended to be constructed differently across the three schools, which seemed to largely relate to the children's socioeconomic status. While most children in Aphrodite school (middle to high SES, mainly GCs) were treated as mature and competent and were provided with the support needed to play an active role in school improvement, the children in the ZEP (low SES, mainly migrants) and St Lazarus school (low to middle SES, mixed) were treated as immature and incompetent and were not provided with this support. Instead, the role of the pupil council in these schools was symbolic. Moreover, some of the ZEP and St Lazarus school teachers constructed their pupils as vulnerable and in need of protection and prioritized their pupils' well-being and self-esteem over their education. This construction was not noted in Aphrodite school, where the children were generally presented as well taken care of from home. Hence, most minority ethnic children in the ZEP and St Lazarus school seemed to be in a particularly disadvantaged

position due to their triple minority status: their minority socioeconomic status, their minority ethnic status and their minority status as children. Contrary to the minority ethnic children of the ZEP and St Lazarus school, most bilingual and / or bicultural children in Aphrodite school seemed to be in a privileged position, due to their simultaneous membership of the dominant group, namely middle to upper class, Orthodox Christian, Greek-Cypriots, and of another cultural group, which, in most cases, had a high value and status in Greek-Cypriot society. Hence, at a first glance, bicultural pupils in Aphrodite school seemed to hold more power than their mainly low SES peers in the ZEP and St Lazarus school. However, their agency in negotiating their cultural positionings at school appeared to be more restricted than the agency of most pupils in the ZEP school and Georgia's (6th gr.) pupils in St Lazarus school.

In Aphrodite school, bicultural children's diverse capitals appeared to be generally appreciated and seen as an asset by the children. According to the 'My Friends and I' handout, all bicultural children were included in one or more friendship groups and their classmates chose to refer to these children's non-Greek-Cypriot background in the question about their friends' nationalities. The different linguistic and / or cultural capital of most bilingual and / or bicultural children in Aphrodite school was generally valued in Greek-Cypriot society, as their non-Greek-Cypriot parents were from countries like England, Russia, the Netherlands and Greece. However, even children whose non-Greek-Cypriot parent was from countries with a comparatively lower status and value in Greek-Cypriot society, like Armenia, Hungary or the Philippines, did not hesitate to talk about their diverse backgrounds. The overall positive understandings of the diversity in the pupil population could also be attributed to the fact that, as the teachers and some of these pupils mentioned, many of the children had extensive travelling experiences and thus, had already had plenty of experiences of diversity. Moreover, the whole school efforts to foster children's respect for difference and empathy through, for example, the school's participation in a Comenius program or school activities in the framework of the anti-bullying action plan may have also contributed to their affirmation of the cultural diversity in their school. Nevertheless, this affirmation did not extend to certain groups, such as the Turks

and black African people, as evidenced by the reproduction of stereotypical images of the two groups in some classes. Moreover, during the discussion about the potential experiences of newly arrived migrant pupils in Cypriot schools and the role plays, several pupils presented migrant children's different religion, nationality, colour and language as markers of discrimination. Consequently, these children's half – Greek-Cypriot origin, middle or high SES and position as an insider in Greek-Cypriot society seemed to play a significant role in the way they experienced and understood their diversity.

Despite the overall appreciation of bicultural children's diverse cultural and linguistic capitals by their peers, there was no evidence of bilingual and bicultural pupils' mobilization of their capitals in spaces other than the teacher-provided ones, such as one-off school events that celebrated linguistic or cultural diversity, occasions when they were called to act as an interpreter for visitors to the school, and ad hoc practices by some teachers who acknowledged the diversity in their classrooms. Moreover, English-speaking pupils had the opportunity to mobilise their diverse linguistic capital during the English classes. Besides these teacher-regulated, one-off, ad hoc opportunities, bilingual and / or bicultural children did not seem to draw on their diverse capital either during the lessons or during the breaks. This could be attributed to the fact that these children were the numerical minority in the school population. Moreover, it could relate to the marginal position of diverse knowledges in the school context, which, in combination with the strong Hellenocentric ethos prevailing in this school, seemed to restrict the options for the bicultural and bilingual children. The message was clear: Greekness was the ideal cultural positioning. Hence, although time and space limitations provided me with a limited picture of their everyday interactions across the various spaces in this very large school, it would not be surprising if these children did not draw on their diverse capitals in spaces other than the aforementioned teacher-provided ones.

In St Lazarus school (low to middle SES, ethnically mixed), the children appeared to exercise their agency in different ways, which seemed to relate to the ways in which their difference was constructed in their classes, in their school and in the

wider Greek-Cypriot society. Some children - mainly Pontian Greek, Turkish-Cypriot Roma and Muslim children - tried to hide aspects of their identities, such as their ethnic or linguistic background or their religion. These children's 'ethnic [and religious] self-monitoring' (Devine, 2009) - an approach commonly employed by minority ethnic children in Cyprus (e.g. Theodorou & Symeou, 2013) and elsewhere (e.g. Devine, 2009; Brown, 2017) - could be ascribed to a number of reasons. Taking into account that the majority of these children appeared to be interested in achieving in their education, as reported by their teachers or suggested by their observed high participation during lessons, it could be suggested that they embraced Cypriot ways of being and acting as a way to accumulate recognized capital that would enhance their life opportunities (Devine, 2009). An even more important motive, however, seemed to be their need to fit in, to be accepted. As suggested by Brown's (2017) research into the development of Latino migrant children's ethnic identity in middle childhood (8-11 years old) in a predominantly White US community, children navigate social identities in ways that maximize the development of relationships with peers and teachers and, thus, a sense of belonging. It must be noted that both the Turkish language which was spoken by many Pontian Greek children at home and the Muslim identity are features associated with 'Turkishness'. Hence, the Pontian Greek, Turkish-Cypriot Roma and Muslim children's negotiations of their cultural positioning seemed to reflect efforts to distance themselves from the dehumanized Other, by claiming a Cypriot, Orthodox Christian identity or hiding their identity. Besides the negative constructions of Turkishness, the strong Hellenocentric and Orthodox Christian ethos in this school, like in Aphrodite school, seemed to leave limited space for difference, in general. In fact, formal space for cultural diversity was restricted to one-off school events celebrating diversity. At the same time, the lesson observations in some classes revealed the marginalization and devaluation of diversity, through teachers' difference-blind approaches, 'microinvalidations' and tolerance of children's 'microinsults' (Sue et al., 2007). Such practices were found to be underpinned by the teachers' prejudices against certain Others, such as 'Turks' and Pontian Greeks. In this environment, certain kinds of difference appeared to be not only an undesirable but also an unsafe mode of being. This

might account not only for the fact that several children used their agency to present themselves as insiders, but also for the fact that, unlike the children in Aphrodite school, many 3rd grade children described their friends as Cypriots in the 'My Friends and I' handout, while the 1st grade pupils did not know where their friends were from. Difference tended to be rendered invisible or even avoided. However, this was not the case in all classes, as illustrated by Georgia's class in this school.

Unlike most bilingual and / or bicultural children in the two mainstream schools, most pupils in the ZEP school (low SES, mainly migrants) appeared to feel comfortable about their difference in school. This was evidenced not only by the fact that they shared information about their ethnic background and that they mentioned their friends' countries of origin in the 'My Friends and I' handout, but many of them also performed their diverse identities, by, for example, speaking their languages during breaks or choosing the food provided for Muslim children. The fact that minority ethnic children felt comfortable about their difference in this school could be attributed to the fact that they were the numerical majority and that difference was not constructed as a problem in this school, as reported by the teachers and several children. This could be attributed to the space and the funding provided by the Ministry for the inclusion of the children's diverse capitals in small, but significant ways. Although the children's voices were not officially included in the school decision making processes through the pupil council, the teachers' willingness to actively listen to their pupils and act as the children's allies through their 'protective mediation' (Osborn et al., 2000) of the curriculum and of the Ministry's policies seemed to have helped most children not only to feel comfortable about their difference, but also to have provided the pupils with the space to develop a strong agency to negotiate the school practices and the school ethos. Children in this school appeared to actively resist what they perceived to be oppressive practices and discourses, defying the power imbalance. The confidence exhibited by the majority of the migrant pupils in this school resembles the confidence with which Turkish-Cypriot Roma pupils publicly asserted their identity in the Greek-Cypriot ZEP school in Theodorou and Symeou's (2013) study. This suggests that the greater autonomy and funding

granted to ZEP schools by the Ministry for teachers to respond to their pupils' needs may provide favourable conditions for the development of empowering school cultures, which can help children feel comfortable about their difference and, as my research shows, enable them to collaborate with their teachers in challenging and deconstructing oppressive discourses and structures.

However, the existence of space for local professional decision-making and the teachers' good intentions and willingness to share authority with their pupils did not seem to be sufficient for the children to feel comfortable about their difference. How the pupils experienced their difference and decided to enact their agency seemed to relate to the teachers' understanding of discrimination and the extent to which the teachers made conscious and systematic efforts to promote an inclusive culture in their classes. This is illustrated by the example of Lina (ZEP, 3rd gr.), the newly arrived Syrian refugee pupil, who resisted her teacher's efforts to help her learn Greek with the help of her mother tongue, Arabic, in the mainstream class. Although Lina's teacher was driven by good intentions and legitimised the use of her home language in class, her limited understanding of discrimination and possibly uncertainty about how to deal with the '*microaggressions*' in her class seemed to have allowed the space for the perpetuation of these behaviours and thus, the construction of difference as a problem. This example suggests that 'reframing borders as boundaries', trying to help children build bridges between their home cultures and their school culture, as suggested by Erickson (2004, see 2.7), may not suffice for borderlands to be created. It seems key for efforts to create openings for otherness in class to be underpinned by an understanding of the ways in which power and discrimination operate that may enable the teacher, first, to identify and question the assumptions about difference underlying their practices and then, to help their pupils challenge, deconstruct and cross, rather than reproduce, socially constructed borders.

To sum up, the bilingual and/or bicultural children in the three schools experienced their difference and negotiated their cultural positionings in different ways, depending on the extent to which their agency was enabled or constrained through their interactions with their teachers and peers and the school environment in

which these interactions were embedded. In Aphrodite school (middle to high SES, mainly Greek-Cypriots), despite the children's expressed appreciation of difference, the fact that the majority of the pupil population was Greek-Cypriot, the strong nationalistic school ethos, the prevailing belief that the pupil population was 'homogeneous' and the teachers' overreliance on the monolingual, Hellenocentric and Christian-centred curriculum left bilingual and bicultural children very limited space to negotiate their cultural positioning. Except for the few occasions when they were given the space to 'display' their diverse capital, there was no evidence of the children's 'other' language or culture in their everyday interactions with their teachers and their peers. In St Lazarus school (low to middle SES, ethnically mixed), despite the ethnically mixed pupil population, the superficial approach to intercultural education in combination with the strong nationalistic ethos and the stigmatization of the identities of certain groups, like the Turks, at the school and classroom level, seemed to have led several children to exercise their agency, by hiding aspects of their identities associated with the primary Other. In the ZEP school, the fact that the vast majority of the pupils were migrants and the teachers' deconstruction of the borders between 'us' – the middle class, mainly Greek-Cypriot adult teachers – and 'them' – the low SES, migrant children – seemed to have contributed to the children's empowerment to resist oppressive discourses and practices. However, what appeared to play a key role as regards the extent to which the children felt comfortable and confident about their difference and constructed borderlands rather than distanced themselves from misrecognized aspects of their identities is the extent to which the teacher not only affirmed their difference and believed in their capacity to achieve but had also provided them with the tools to critically engage with the hegemonic discourses regarding difference and to challenge the status quo.

It needs to be acknowledged that the ways in which children enact their agency and negotiate their positioning may vary across time and space and thus, no generalizations can be made. As Gaine and George (1999) underline, resistance and accommodation do not constitute 'an either / or choice but a continuum of responses and behaviour which may be utilized at different times in different

circumstances in response to different teachers, phases of schooling, and locations in school' (p. 92).

However, the patterns that emerged from the cross-case analysis point to some interesting issues that merit attention. Taking into account the significance of recognising the whole child and expanding rather than ignoring, exoticising, inferiorizing or rejecting their linguistic and cultural capital for the children's active engagement in their learning (Cummins, 2009; Mitchell, 2012), their achievement (Heckmann, 2008; Kyles & Olafson, 2008; Llurda & Lasagabaster, 2010) and their self-esteem (Delpit, 1995), teachers' political literacy and critical consciousness seem of primary importance. They seem key to their capacity to enable their pupils to actively engage in deconstructing borders and constructing borderlands and thus, to the provision of equitable educational opportunities to all children, which, according to the MoEC, is one of the aims of the democratic and humane school.

CONCLUSION

Introduction

This final chapter summarizes the findings of this research. It starts by revisiting and answering the research questions and continues by discussing the implications for theory, policy and practice and future research. It ends with some final reflections on this research and intercultural education in the Greek-Cypriot context.

9.1 Answering the Research Questions

The aim of this study was to critically examine conceptualizations and constructions of cultural diversity and intercultural education in Greek-Cypriot state primary schools after the introduction of a new national curriculum. Being part of the wider reforms of the Greek-Cypriot education system aiming at its Europeanization and internationalization, the purpose of the new curriculum has been the creation of the ‘democratic’ and ‘humane’ school: a school which, among other things, recognizes, accepts and respects diversity and provides equal opportunities for access, participation and achievement to all pupils (MoEC website). The new curriculum has also marked a significant shift in the policy discourse as regards teacher professionalism, as it has attempted to ‘reconstitute teachers / public servants / technocrats as autonomous professional pedagogues’ (Kontovourki, Theodorou & Philippou, 2015, p. 121), inviting them to use their ‘pedagogical autonomy for differentiated teaching and teaching that results in learning for all pupils’ (MoEC, 2010, p. 15). However, there is a tension in the policy discourse between the Europeanised rhetoric of intercultural education, inclusion, respect for diversity and social justice and the continuing emphasis on the long-established ideology of Hellenocentrism, which aims at building a Greek national identity.

Taking an ecological approach (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Priestley, Biesta & Robinson, 2015) and understanding the context as playing a key role in shaping constructions of cultural diversity and intercultural education, I constructed three critical ethnographic case studies of intercultural education in three urban Greek-Cypriot primary schools with different profiles, with a view to answering the following research questions:

RQ 1: What are primary school teachers' and head teachers' beliefs, understandings and practices in relation to cultural diversity and intercultural education?

RQ 2: What do teachers and head teachers perceive as the challenges to, and opportunities for, the implementation of intercultural education in Greek-Cypriot primary schools?

RQ 3: How do primary school pupils understand and respond to cultural diversity and possible intercultural education developments within diverse school environments?

I provide a brief summary of the key findings of this study below, by answering each of the research questions.

RQ 1: What are primary school head teachers' and teachers' beliefs, understandings and practices in relation to cultural diversity and intercultural education?

Contradictions characterized the head teachers' narratives about cultural diversity and intercultural education. For instance, while they expressed their empathy for working-class and / or minority ethnic parents, they also took a cultural deficit approach, portraying them as having limited education and the ZEP (very low to middle SES, mainly migrants) and St Lazarus school (low to middle SES, mixed

pupil population) head teachers also described them as indifferent to their children's education. Similarly, they portrayed minority ethnic pupils as causing no problems to the school (ZEP), as being '*our best pupils*' (St Lazarus) or as a resource (Aphrodite, middle to high SES, mainly GCs). At the same time, though, they also implicitly or explicitly constructed them as a challenge or a problem. These contradictions seem to reflect the ideological, moral and emotional struggle these head teachers seemed to be experiencing, being unprepared and ill-supported to respond to the unprecedentedly high degree of diversity in schools and in society.

Although they portrayed themselves and the teachers as change agents who can or have to '*create the opportunities*' for intercultural education, they all expressed a sense of powerlessness and uncertainty about how to approach I.E. and identified several constraints to their agency in relation to I.E. These constraints included the '*minimal*' support by the Ministry in terms of guidelines and resources, the reduced school funding due to the economic crisis (ZEP); and the limited support by parents in St Lazarus and the ZEP school. Combined with the head teachers' limited prior professional experience of a high degree of cultural diversity, these constraints seemed to have resulted in their perceiving intercultural education as a '*struggle for each school*' (Antonis, St Lazarus), '*a necessary evil*' (Panayiotis, ZEP), or as marginally relevant to the school because of its '*homogeneous*' pupil population (Athanasia, Aphrodite).

Having had long professional experience in a traditionally centralised and Hellenocentric education system and lacking the tools to explore alternative possibilities, the two mainstream school headteachers (St Lazarus & Aphrodite) appeared to rely on the policy discourse and its emphasis on the Greek language support for other-language-speaking pupils. They constructed I.E. as a temporary policy targeting 'other-language-speaking' pupils and they assigned it a marginal position in the school agenda due to the belief either that the absence of relevant structural reforms restricted the staff members' agency for change (St Lazarus) or that I.E. was of limited relevance to the school (Aphrodite). Thus, both head teachers appeared to question the relevance of I.E. as a distinct part of the curriculum.

Both head teachers tried to create links between the school and the community and presented eliminating discrimination as their '*daily routine*'. These efforts, however, which were not presented as related to I.E., did not seem to be underpinned by an understanding of discrimination and power issues, as they left 'othering' discourses and the marginalization and exoticization of cultural diversity through one-off events celebrating diversity unchallenged. Driven by his justice-oriented concerns, Antonis made some adjustments to the MoEC's guidelines as regards the GAL sessions, to better cater for the needs of 'other-language-speaking' pupils. However, the absence of a coordinated whole school approach to I.E. in both schools left its implementation up to '*each teacher's willingness*'.

The ZEP school head teacher portrayed I.E. as '*what we experience daily*' because of the highly diverse pupil population in this school. Like the head teachers in the other two schools, he exhibited a narrow understanding of I.E. and discrimination. However, his belief that I.E. was the appropriate approach in this school and his distributed style of leadership allowed the space for the staff members' collective engagement with the I.E. policy, the curriculum and their practices and exploration of alternative discourses that extended beyond the policy discourse, driven by the common concern about how to best respond to their highly diverse pupil population. However, the absence of a shared school vision, set of values and policies to guide teachers' practices resulted in inconsistencies and contradictions among and within most teachers' practices, as in the other two schools, as explained below.

Teacher beliefs, conceptualizations and practices were found to vary depending on the interplay of, on the one hand, the institutional context and, on the other hand, the teachers' positioning in Greek-Cypriot society and the extent to which they had developed a political literacy and critical consciousness through their life and professional histories.

Most dominant group teachers in the two mainstream schools, St Lazarus and Aphrodite school, constructed both the primary ethnic Other – the 'Turks' – and

the recently arrived migrants in essentialist, predominantly negative ways. The ‘Turks’ – in most cases, without a clear distinction between the Turks and the Turkish-Cypriots – were portrayed as ‘the enemy’, the ‘barbarian’ Other (see also Zembylas, 2010f). Migrants were often depicted as a material and / or symbolic threat, in other words, as the new Other. Greek-Cypriot teachers’ negative stereotypical understandings and/or deficit views of migrants have also been recorded by earlier research (e.g. Zembylas, 2010g; Papamichael, 2011; Theodorou, 2011). These teachers’ socialization in an ethnically divided society after the 1974 war, the signs of the ongoing inter-ethnic conflict in their everyday lives and the institutional discourses about the primary Other, which reproduced negative stereotypical images of the Turks, contributed to these teachers’ prejudices against the ethnic Other and normalized them. The economic crisis, the fragile political situation due to the unresolved conflict, the negative representations of migrants in the media and political discourse (see ECRI, 2011; Trimikliniotis & Demetriou, 2011; Hajisoteriou, 2012) and the long-established hegemony of Hellenocentrism in Greek-Cypriot society and education system facilitated the projection of the ‘us’ versus ‘them’ framework onto the relationship with the new Other.

However, although, as regards the ‘Turks’, the teachers constructed rigid and fixed borders between ‘us’ and ‘them’, openly admitting their prejudices, fear and intolerance, their narratives about migrants also drew upon the human rights discourse, especially in Aphrodite school (middle to high SES, mainly Greek-Cypriots), where whole-school efforts were made to foster pupils’ acceptance of difference through the anti-bullying action plan. Moreover, the various Others were not all constructed in the same way. For example, while low SES Pontian Greeks and Turkish Cypriot Roma were constructed in deficit terms by some teachers in St Lazarus school (low to middle SES, mixed pupil population), middle- to high-SES Western Europeans were constructed in positive terms by some teachers in Aphrodite school, as evidenced by comments, like ‘*in this school foreign parents are mainly Europeans, who are closer to our culture, so there has never been a problem due to origin*’. Teachers’ beliefs about, and understandings of, different groups, who were positioned either closer to the ethnic Self and

ascribed higher value and status or distanced from the Self and ascribed lower value and status, related to the Other's origin and socioeconomic status, common societal stereotypes (see 1.2.2) and institutional discourses about these groups or axes of these groups' identities. In both schools, institutional discourses demonized 'Turkishness', which is related to the Pontian Greeks and the Roma, as both groups speak Turkish and the latter belong to the Turkish-Cypriot community (see also Theodorou & Symeou, 2013). At the same time, however, in Aphrodite school, institutional discourses that aimed at engendering a European identity and consciousness, represented Europe as 'our' community and the Western European languages and cultures as assets. Nevertheless, in the case of low-performing bilingual pupils, the 'other' linguistic capital even of Greek-speaking children from mixed marriages whose mother was Western European was presented as a barrier to these pupils' educational achievement.

Unlike most of their colleagues in the mainstream schools, the ZEP school dominant group teachers did not simply reproduce but also engaged with and challenged dominant discourses about cultural diversity, including the policy discourse, and appeared to be at a stage of transition as regards their beliefs and understandings in relation to cultural diversity. Specifically, they constructed the borders between 'us' and 'them' – the 'Turks' – as negotiable rather than fixed and rigid. Moreover, although they reproduced some of the prevailing negative societal stereotypes about migrants, they were also critical of common negative representations of migrants and of the state's approach to immigration issues. These teachers exhibited a growing understanding of the ways in which power and privilege operate. The development of this understanding was facilitated by the institutional features of the ZEP school, such as the low SES, mainly migrant pupil population, which gave teachers opportunities for daily exposure to the lived experiences of their multiply disadvantaged pupils, and the space for local professional decision-making provided by the MoEC and the head teacher's distributed style of leadership. Combined with the history of this school as '*a school for foreign kids*' and the institutional discourses about diversity that constructed it as the norm, these factors expanded opportunities for teachers to individually and collectively engage with multiple perspectives presented by their

pupils and critical voices among staff members and to reflect on and negotiate the hegemonic discourses and their beliefs and understandings in relation to cultural diversity. The difference in the dominant group teachers' beliefs about, and understandings of, the 'Turks' and the migrants between the two mainstream schools presented above and the ZEP school (low SES, mainly migrants) highlights the potential of the institutional context to enable or constrain teachers' engagement with societal discourses about various ethnic Others and their own beliefs about and understandings of cultural diversity. In turn, the extent to which they were enabled to engage with hegemonic discourses in the institutional context affected dominant group teachers' understandings, beliefs and practices in relation to intercultural education, as explained below.

Despite the overall consensus regarding the relevance of intercultural education, some teachers, mainly in the two mainstream schools, oscillated between its relevance for all schools or only for schools with 'other-language-speaking' pupils. This reflects the absence of clear and shared understandings of intercultural education, which was particularly evident in their conceptualizations of intercultural education. These ranged from conservatized and depoliticized conceptions of intercultural education to, in very few cases, political, transformative ones. Specifically, almost half of the participant teachers conceptualized intercultural education as an add-on to the existing curriculum, aiming at the children's familiarization with other cultures and at the celebration of diversity. An equal number of teachers emphasized the '*acceptance of diversity*' or respect for difference. However, their simultaneous emphasis on sameness over difference or the children's familiarization with other cultures, while leaving structural inequalities unacknowledged, reflected an equally limited understanding of cultural and institutional racism as exhibited by the former group. Some teachers understood intercultural education as culturally responsive teaching, while others as intercultural exchange. Possibly influenced by the policy discourse, some teachers also used the term intercultural education to refer to Greek language teaching to 'other-language-speaking' pupils. Only the Greek teacher in the ZEP school, who exhibited a heightened critical consciousness and a theoretical understanding of power and social justice issues showed an

understanding of intercultural education as a coherent political and transformative approach that aimed at social reconstruction for social justice. The variety and, in some cases, contradictions in teachers' understandings and beliefs about intercultural education reflect the absence of a coherent theoretical framework of I.E. and the coexistence of contradictory discourses, underpinned by conflicting ideologies, in the policy discourse. In combination with most dominant group teachers' essentialist, predominantly negative understandings of cultural diversity in education; their reported limited or no prior experience of diversity in schools or relevant professional development; and most teachers' narrow understandings of the purpose of education, the absence of a clear and shared understanding of intercultural education constrained teachers' agency in taking I.E. forward.

Teachers' approaches to cultural diversity and intercultural education varied across schools and within schools. In the two mainstream schools, most teachers took difference-blind, occasionally additive, and deficit approaches to cultural diversity. In Aphrodite school, some teachers occasionally engaged their pupils in discussions about discrimination and diversity issues either as part of activities within the framework of the anti-bullying action plan or due to the pupils' discriminatory behaviour towards one of their classmates. However, the anti-racist discourses promoted through the anti-bullying action-plan were contradicted and counteracted by the marginalization and exoticization of the bilingual and / or bicultural pupils' diverse cultural and linguistic capitals and the strong nationalistic and Eurocentric school ethos. On the other hand, the teachers in the ZEP school engaged in the 'protective mediation' (Osborn et al., 2000) of the curriculum and the MoEC's policies to minimize the Hellenocentric and Orthodox-Christian-centred ethos permeating the education system; adjusted their teaching content and practices to respond to their pupils' needs as they deemed best; and tried to include other knowledges to a greater or lesser extent, depending on their beliefs and understandings in relation to cultural diversity and intercultural education. This difference in teachers' enactments of the intercultural education policy between the two mainstream schools and the ZEP school seems to relate to differences in terms of the cultural and structural aspects of these schools and the material resources available. Specifically, unlike the ZEP school, where, as

explained, teachers had opportunities to engage with hegemonic discourses about cultural diversity and exhibited an understanding of the moral purposes of education, the teachers in the two mainstream schools did not have similar opportunities. The rigid hierarchical culture and the peripheralization of intercultural education in these schools' agendas due to the absence of centralized support and other school priorities, which focused mainly on the here and now rather than on the broader purpose of education, provided teachers with no space to collectively develop a coherent philosophy of education and to make sense of, and engage with, the intercultural education policy. This absence of space combined with the continuing hegemony of the long-established Hellenocentric and Orthodox Christian-centred ethos in these schools and the restriction of intercultural education to one-off events celebrating diversity and, in St Lazarus school, Greek language support sessions did not encourage teachers to engage with their entrenched beliefs, understandings and routinized practices. Instead, it arguably reinforced them.

Compared to the dominant group teachers, teachers, like Georgia (St Lazarus) and Lambros (ZEP), who embodied diversity and had developed a political literacy and critical consciousness through their life and professional histories exhibited more consistent and coherent justice-oriented beliefs, understandings and practices in relation to cultural diversity and intercultural education. Specifically, they expressed their empathy for minoritized ethnic groups and critiqued oppressive discourses and practices in the Greek-Cypriot political and sociocultural context. Driven by a commitment to the values of equity and social justice, they tried to implement 'border pedagogy' (Giroux, 2016 [2006]) in their classes to the extent allowed by the education system, by including all their pupils, affirming their diverse cultural and linguistic capitals and helping them develop a critical consciousness through critical engagement with hegemonic discourses and their lived experiences. Acting as 'activist professionals' (Sachs, 2003; Hayes et al, 2006), these teachers tried to promote justice-oriented practices at the school level, too, but the degree to which they could achieve agency depended on the school leadership, the school culture and the school profile.

In conclusion, teachers' beliefs, understandings and practices in relation to cultural diversity and intercultural education were found to be largely influenced by the extent to which their life and professional histories and / or the institutional context provided them with opportunities to engage with hegemonic discourses about cultural diversity, challenge and deconstruct them, 'allow[ing] for the passage toward the other' (Derrida (2007[1987]), p. 45).

RQ 2: What do teachers and head teachers perceive as the challenges to, and opportunities for, the implementation of intercultural education in Greek-Cypriot primary schools?

Despite the recent curriculum reform, opportunities for intercultural education were considered to still be very limited. Some subjects, such as Health Education, Greek, Geography and Religious Education, and one-off events that celebrate diversity were presented by some staff members as opportunities for intercultural education. The suggested opportunities, however, reflect a depoliticized approach, which treats I.E. as an add-on to the existing curriculum. Some teachers and head teachers understood that this was an insufficient response to cultural diversity. However, most staff members perceived their agency in relation to I.E. as being constrained by several factors.

The most commonly cited constraint was the limited support by the MoEC for the promotion of intercultural education. The absence of a clear and coherent philosophy of education underpinning the reforms, of a clear definition of I.E. and of guidelines that extend beyond GAL teaching, of professional development, and of relevant resources were identified by most staff members as factors that did not assist them in taking I.E. forward. Combined with most staff members' limited professional experience of cultural diversity in schools, the limited support by the MoEC resulted in their experiencing '*confusion*', uncertainty about how to approach I.E. and a sense of powerlessness. These feelings were reinforced by the

pressure to cover what was described as an overloaded and demanding curriculum that restricted diversity issues mainly to the subject of Health Education. Although the ZEP teachers had more flexibility as regards the curriculum, the absence of a systematic and intensive approach to Greek as an additional language (GAL) teaching on the part of the Ministry was presented by both the ZEP and St Lazarus school teachers as a factor that forced them to simplify the syllabus due to the varying levels of their bilingual pupils' Greek language competence. Overall, most staff members across schools critiqued the education system for curtailing their capacity to provide their pupils with equitable educational opportunities and complained about the lack of communication between the Ministry and the schools.

Some teachers also underlined the absence of support for I.E. at the institutional level. The absence of policies and action plans that could engage the whole school community in taking I.E. forward and the limited involvement of working-class and / or non-Greek-Cypriot parents in their children's education were understood as restricting what was feasible at the school level. Furthermore, the ZEP teachers underlined the absence of support for interculturalism in the political and sociocultural context, which further intensified their sense of isolation in their efforts to respond to the high degree of cultural diversity in their school.

The aforementioned challenges, many of which were also reported by Greek-Cypriot teachers in Hajisoteriou and Angelides' (2016) study, contributed to many teachers' and head teachers' expressed feelings of powerlessness, anxiety, isolation and limited confidence in taking I.E. forward and their belief that their agency for change was severely constrained. Despite the rhetoric of teachers' re-professionalization and of intercultural education, the incorporation of the suggested ideological shifts into the existing cultures and structures of schools impeded teachers' agency and thus, implicitly sustained established beliefs about the Other, the teachers' role and their practices, as illustrated by most dominant group teachers' beliefs, understandings and practices in relation to cultural diversity and intercultural education and the opportunities and challenges they perceived. However, teachers' life and professional experiences and features of

the institutional context, such as the school leadership, the school culture, the degree of autonomy and financial support officially granted to the school by the Ministry and the composition of the pupil population, were found to affect the extent to which teachers achieved agency in taking I.E. forward.

RQ 3: How do primary school pupils understand and respond to cultural diversity and possible intercultural education developments within diverse school environments?

Most pupils across schools presented the term cultural diversity as encompassing diversity in terms of all or some of the following: language, nationality, religion and colour. These were usually identified as markers not only of difference, but also of discrimination. Contrary to the head teachers' and most teachers' denials of racism, most Greek-Cypriot and minority ethnic children acknowledged the existence of prejudices in Greek-Cypriot schools against newly arrived migrant and refugee pupils and some of them exhibited a more sophisticated understanding and suggested that the group the Other belongs to and its historical relation to Cyprus matters.

Lesson and break observations and the whole-class activities with the children showed that the institutional context and the Other's ethnic and cultural background influenced children's understandings of, and responses to, cultural diversity. Specifically, in classes across the three schools where conscious efforts were made to raise the children's awareness of racism, several Greek-Cypriot and minority ethnic pupils expressed their opposition to racism, their empathy for minority ethnic children and their willingness to include them in their friendship groups. This was manifested by the pupils' inclusion of minority ethnic newcomers in the ZEP and St Lazarus school and of children from mixed marriages in Aphrodite school. However, in most classes, some - predominantly Greek-Cypriot but also some minority ethnic – pupils reproduced othering

discourses with reference to certain groups, such as the Turks and - in Aphrodite school - black African people, without considering them to be racist. These othering discourses resonated with dominant institutional discourses regarding these groups. These powerful institutional discourses not only counteracted individual teachers' or, in the case of Aphrodite school, even whole-school efforts to raise pupils' awareness of racism and general prejudice, but also normalized such outlooks, as suggested by the fact that these othering discourses comfortably coexisted with anti-racist discourses and by the ease with which they were employed by the children and went unnoticed or were even reinforced by some dominant group teachers.

Institutional features, such as the composition of the pupil population, institutional discourses about diverse identities and cultures and the teacher's approaches to cultural diversity were found to affect the ways in which bilingual and / or bicultural children experienced their difference and negotiated their cultural positionings in school.

In Aphrodite school (middle to high SES, mainly GCs), where Hellenocentric and Eurocentric discourses coexisted with antiracist discourses, most Greek-speaking children of mixed marriages, whose migrant parent in many cases was a Westerner, felt comfortable about their difference, which they claimed enthusiastically during the activities. These children were included in friendship groups. However, they did not seem to mobilize their diverse linguistic and / or cultural capital besides the few occasions when they were provided with the space to do so in class or at a whole school level. This could be attributed to their numerical minority and the overall misrecognition of their diverse linguistic and cultural capitals in this school, where the belief prevailed that the pupil population was homogeneous.

In St Lazarus school, where Hellenocentric discourses prevailed and negative stereotypical representations of Turks were reproduced at the school level through national commemorative events and, in some cases, at the classroom level, most pupils whose difference was associated with various aspects of Turkish identity,

such as Muslim, Pontian Greek and Turkish Cypriot Roma pupils, were found to use their agency to hide their difference. For example, some of them claimed a Greek-Cypriot identity or took part in the Orthodox Christian morning prayer to fit in. Despite their efforts to fit in, the institutional, the teachers' and their peers' othering discourses and practices made school life particularly challenging for some of them, who experienced isolation and 'racial microaggressions' daily (Sue et al., 2007). The only exception in this school was the 6th grade, where the Maronite teacher's affirmative and inclusive discourses and practices and conscious and systematic efforts to help her pupils critically engage with the hegemonic discourses about diversity and achieve academically contributed to her minority ethnic pupils' confidence in their difference and their social inclusion, even in the cases when aspects of their identity were associated with the socially and institutionally stigmatized Turkish identity.

In the ZEP school (very low to middle SES, mainly migrants), where diversity was constructed as the norm and whole school efforts were made to minimize the Hellenocentrism and Orthodox Christian-centredness permeating the education system, many children performed their identities, by for example, speaking their languages and choosing the food provided for Muslim pupils. Many children in this school used their agency to resist oppressive discourses and practices, defying hierarchies. Moreover, unlike St Lazarus school, Muslim pupils felt comfortable about their religious difference which may relate to the fact that efforts were made by many teachers in this school to avoid the reproduction of negative stereotypical representations of the Turks and generally, of binary divides. The school also made special provisions in recognition of the dietary requirements of Muslims.

The ways in which bilingual and / or bicultural children experience their diverse identities in school are of utmost importance, as they carry implications for their self-concept and self-esteem (Delpit, 1995) and their engagement with learning (Cummins, 2009; Mitchell, 2012). This study shows that cultural diversity was not understood and responded to by children in a coherent and fixed way. The ways in which different identities and cultures were represented and constructed at the institutional level affected children's understandings of and responses to them and

bilingual and / or bicultural children's negotiation of their cultural positionings. Although individual teachers' practices did not appear sufficient on their own to enable children's deconstruction of deeply ingrained, institutionally sustained prejudice against certain Others, such as the Turks, they still played a key role in expanding or restricting pupils' opportunities for border-crossings and the creation of borderlands, where the children could build bridges between their home and the host culture instead of being forced to abandon their home culture to be accepted, valued and included.

By answering these research questions, this study has shown that the enactment of the intercultural education policy in primary schools in the conflict-ridden and ethnically divided Greek-Cypriot society is a particularly challenging and complex process, as suggested also by other studies in the Cypriot context (e.g. Papamichael, 2011; Theodorou, 2011; Hajisoteriou & Angelides, 2016a). Contradictions, inconsistencies and ambivalences reflected in institutional and teachers' discourses and practices indicate the ideological, emotional and moral struggles that most head teachers and teachers experienced in their efforts to make sense of intercultural education and the new reality of the increasing cultural diversity in schools and in society, without having been equipped with the tools to engage with intercultural education. The findings of this study carry implications for theory, policy and practice, which are presented below.

9.2 Implications for Theory

The absence of a universally agreed definition and theoretical framework of intercultural education (Rey, 1996; Aguado & Malik, 2006; Gundara & Portera, 2008; Dunne, 2011); the lack of evidence of how it could be practically applied (Gundara & Portera, 2008); and the different political, historical, economic and sociocultural conditions in different contexts have led to a number of different understandings and practices of intercultural education (Aguado & Malik, 2006;

Bleszynska, 2008; Gundara & Portera, 2008; Aguado & Malik, 2011). This study has sought to contribute to debates regarding the meaning and implementation of the vague concept of intercultural education in different national contexts, with a view to contributing to a deeper understanding of how the EU-recommended policy of intercultural education is translated into practice in different political, economic and sociocultural contexts.

Exploring the country of Cyprus with its historical and contemporary issues around conflict as well as its recent economic woes, was important as it highlights that I.E. curriculum reform has to take account of the significant geographical and historical narratives of belonging experienced in different contexts. In particular, any kind of reform has to engage with the ways in which such narratives may influence individual communities, schools and teachers. This thesis argues that the development of a universal or even national definition of intercultural education is inappropriate. Specifically, exploring institutional, teachers' and children's understandings of and constructions of cultural diversity, this study has found that different cultures and identities were understood and constructed in different, often essentialist ways and ascribed different value and status, depending on various factors, including the teachers' and children's cultural and social positioning in Greek-Cypriot society, the teachers' degree of conscientization and the institutional and historical and sociopolitical context. A one-size-fits-all solution would overlook the different context-contingent needs of different Others for their recognition and full participation in education. Hence, a universal definition or even national definition of intercultural education is likely to sustain the misrecognition of various Others, by homogenizing their diverse experiences of discrimination. For this same reason, the present study also problematizes the concept of cultural diversity. Although this concept was employed to explore teachers', head teachers' and children's understandings and constructions of ethnic, linguistic, religious and cultural diversity, it was eventually found problematic, as it did not capture the various layers of complexity involved, as described above. Instead, it tended to lead to an understanding of relationships in binary terms, namely between 'us' – the ethnic Self – and 'them' – the culturally diverse ones. However, as described throughout the thesis, different Others were

understood and constructed in different ways by differently positioned people and in different institutional contexts.

However, this thesis argues that the development of a universal theoretical framework of intercultural education is of utmost importance to enable the development of a common language and a shared understanding of the theoretical principles and values that could guide intercultural education policies and practices and, thus, enable teachers to take it forward. The absence of a clear and shared understanding of intercultural education within schools and the absence of space for the development of such an understanding in the mainstream schools did not assist teachers in developing their professional agency in taking intercultural education forward. The development of a coherent theoretical framework of intercultural education, which will equip all teachers and head teachers with the cognitive tools to engage with and reflect on their beliefs and routinized practices and their impact on their pupils' self-concept and academic achievement would help them to move beyond the current sense of powerlessness, confusion and anxiety expressed by many of them and develop the capacity and confidence to take intercultural education forward. To address this gap in the literature and enable the examination of current constructions of intercultural education in Greek-Cypriot primary schools, this thesis has developed a theoretical framework of intercultural education (see chapter 2), drawing on key relevant theoretical concepts, namely essentialism, 'othering', recognition, deconstruction and border crossing. This framework could contribute to discussions about the development of a theoretically grounded understanding of intercultural education. It could also assist in further research on conceptualizations and constructions of intercultural education in different contexts.

Furthermore, the findings of this study move beyond Giddens' (1984) structuration theory and underline the important role of the school ethos as a mediator between agency and social structures. In the ZEP school where cultural diversity and intercultural education were understood as the norm by the staff members and the school ethos was negotiated between the teachers and their highly diverse pupil population to the extent allowed by the system, both teachers

and pupils achieved higher degrees of agency in challenging oppressive dominant discourses. Unlike the two mainstream schools, in this school, both teachers and children were found to challenge the Hellenocentrism and Orthodox Christian-centredness permeating the education system. In contrast, in the two mainstream schools, where a Hellenocentric and Orthodox Christian-centred ethos prevailed and thus, othering was to some extent normalised and naturalised, both teachers and children were found to have limited agency in negotiating oppressive discourses and structures at the school level. These findings confirm the significant role of culture as a mediator between agency and structure as suggested by Thompson's (2003) "double dialectic" of agency, culture and structure'. Although the wider socio-political context affected the extent to which teachers could achieve agency in taking intercultural education forward, the school ethos played a key role in enabling or constraining both teachers' and children's agency in challenging oppressive dominant discourses and structures.

This finding contributes to existing research on intercultural education in the Greek-Cypriot context, where limited attention seems to have been paid to how features of the institutional context interact with individual teachers' beliefs, values and knowledge, enabling or constraining teacher agency in taking intercultural education forward. This study found that the extent to which and the ways in which teachers exercised their agency and engaged with intercultural education were influenced by institutional features, such as the degree of autonomy and financial support officially granted to the school by the Ministry; the school leadership style and the head teacher's construction of diversity and intercultural education; the composition of the pupil population; institutional history; and the institutional discourses about diversity.

The next section discusses the implications of the findings of this study for policy and practice.

9.3. Implications for Policy and Practice

The findings of this study carry implications for policy in the EU and Cypriot context as well as for practice.

As regards EU policies, the development of a coherent theoretical framework of intercultural education is considered to be of prime importance to enable nation-states and school staff to develop a shared understanding of the theoretical principles and values underpinning this approach to cultural diversity and assist them in reviewing current policies and practices. The emphasis on culture in the term ‘intercultural education’ tends to detract attention from structural inequalities and, as shown by the findings in the two mainstream schools, often results in approaches that occasionally celebrate diversity, while generally treating all pupils in the same way, reproducing, thus, differences and inequalities that further reinforce oppression and exclusion (Gillborn, 2004; Arshad et al., 2005).

At the national level, the findings of this study suggest that by incorporating concepts, such as intercultural education and teacher professionalism, into the existing cultures and structures of schools whilst not equipping teachers and head teachers with the cognitive and material resources that could enable them to achieve agency in promoting intercultural education, the curriculum reform has undermined teachers’ agency for change. Specifically, the ambiguity surrounding the concept of intercultural education and its coexistence with the long-established hegemonic ideology of Hellenocentrism in the policy discourse limits the possibilities for teachers and head teachers to depart from the safety of familiar, routinized practices, which are aligned with the hegemonic ideology in society. The perceived high degree of risk involved in engaging with intercultural education and generally, in experimenting with alternative approaches that deviate from the norm of Hellenocentrism in this ethnically divided and conflict-ridden context (see also Charalambous, Charalambous & Zembylas, 2013; Philippou, Kontovourki & Theodorou, 2014) necessitates a centrally-defined coherent and clear philosophy of education that will bring interculturalism to the forefront and thus, reduce the risk, by legitimising head teachers’ and teachers’ transformative

action. Moreover, enabling schools to develop approaches to intercultural education that are meaningful and relevant to their local needs requires policies that address the current structures of schools and enable the schooling system to move away from rigid hierarchical cultures and a transactional style of leadership that has been promoted by the centralized education system so far and develop inclusive school cultures and transformational (Blair, 2002) or social justice leadership (Theoharis, 2007) of a distributed nature.

At the school level, this study suggests that it is necessary for schools to create the space for teachers' reflective and generative dialogue and engagement with broader educational issues that will enable them to view and deal with concerns about the here and now through the prism of a broader shared vision and set of values. This space, as illustrated by the example of the ZEP school, can enable teachers to collectively reflect on their practices, engage with multiple perspectives and knowledges and collectively build their capacity to take intercultural education forward in locally relevant ways. Moreover, the findings of this study suggest that this dialogue should also be informed by theory to enable teachers to make informed and consistent choices rather than rely merely on the policy discourse and their 'knowledge-of-practice' (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999). Lack of theoretical understanding of power and social justice issues and of the role teachers can play in sustaining or disrupting the cycle of oppression limited even the ZEP school dominant group teachers' capacity to develop consistent justice-oriented practices. The development of 'inquiry communities' in schools (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999), driven by a shared moral vision, could be a useful way to enable teachers to generate knowledge by engaging with multiple discourses stemming from the whole school community, cognitive resources and their daily practices. This process of conscientization seems key to enabling head teachers and teachers to move beyond the current fragmented, isolated and, most often, simplistic approaches to intercultural education and engage with intercultural education as a philosophy that permeates all policies, processes, discourses and practices in schools. Schools' capacity building for engaging with intercultural education can be further enhanced through building networks across schools. This has been suggested by the MoEC (see F:7.1.19.1/16,

3 September 2013). Nevertheless, to enable such shifts to existing cultures and structures, it seems necessary for the MoEC to remove existing barriers it places on head teachers and teachers, by ‘controll[ing] their time, space, and PD [professional development]’ (Kontovourki, Theodorou & Philippou, 2015, p. 107).

9.4 Implications for Further Research

Further research could explore how cultural diversity and intercultural education are constructed in Cypriot nursery schools or secondary schools with different profiles. It could also include parents’ perspectives on cultural diversity and intercultural education, which seem to have received limited attention in the Cypriot context.

This study found a relationship between institutional features and teachers’ agency in taking intercultural education forward. One of these features was the style of leadership. Specifically, the distributed style of leadership in the ZEP school was found to contribute to the staff’s collective development of their professional agency and, thus, their empowerment to engage with and challenge oppressive hegemonic discourses in the curriculum and in society and revise their practices to respond best to their highly diverse pupils. Nevertheless, it is not certain whether the same style of leadership in a mainstream school with a lower degree of cultural diversity in its pupil population would have a similar impact on constructions of cultural diversity and intercultural education. As leadership has been found to play a key role in the creation of an environment in schools that is conducive to the success of minority ethnic pupils in education (e.g. Blair, 2002; Bishop, 2011), further research is needed to explore the interplay between different styles of leadership and constructions of cultural diversity and intercultural education in Greek-Cypriot schools.

This study started exploring the ways in which pupils respond to their teachers’ and institutional discourses and practices in relation to cultural diversity. It would

be interesting to further explore the ways in which minority ethnic pupils of teachers who implement a border pedagogy negotiate their cultural positionings in response to different teachers with different approaches to cultural diversity as well as in different spaces in and out of school. This would allow the exploration of whether and how their experiences of inclusion and recognition and the critical discussions about diversity issues they engage in in these classes shape their negotiations of their cultural positionings in different contexts.

Furthermore, since 2015 the Code against Racism has been introduced into Greek-Cypriot schools with a view to assisting school staff in identifying and addressing racist incidents and in developing an anti-racist culture in schools. Future research could explore the implications of this measure for constructions of cultural diversity and intercultural education in schools.

9.5 Final Reflections

This research has critically examined constructions of cultural diversity and intercultural education in three Greek-Cypriot primary schools with different profiles after the introduction of a new curriculum aiming at the creation of the ‘democratic’ and ‘humane’ school. It has cast light on the complexities and challenges involved in taking forward intercultural education in the ethnically divided and conflict-ridden context of Cyprus and it has argued that by leaving the existing cultures and structures of schools unchallenged, the curriculum reform has undermined teachers’ agency in promoting intercultural education. However, this study has shown that despite the constraints, there are spaces for transformative action. Specifically, it has demonstrated the key role that the institutional context and teachers’ beliefs about cultural diversity and degree of understanding of power and social justice issues can play in enhancing or constraining teachers’ agency, and thus, in shaping constructions of cultural diversity and intercultural education in schools. Moreover, whether and the extent to which bilingual and / or bicultural children’s diverse capitals were recognised and included at the school and / or at the classroom level and hegemonic discourses

about diversity were critically discussed or reproduced in class were found to affect the ways in which these children negotiated their cultural positionings.

I acknowledge that my personal history, my socio-historical and political location and my participation in the social world I have studied have contributed to shaping this study, which has been driven by my personal interest and commitment to equity and justice in education and in society. Moreover, the findings that emerged from the three in-depth critical ethnographic case studies are not generalizable. However, sufficient information about the political, historical and sociocultural context of Cyprus and each case study school has been provided to allow the readers to “make an informed judgment about how far the findings have relevance to other instances” (Denscombe, 1998, p. 37) and resonance for those trying to engage with issues of interculturalism.

I hope that the findings of this thesis open up space for dialogue and further exploration of how to promote intercultural education grounded in social justice and equity in Cyprus and beyond, as I firmly believe that, besides the importance of doing justice to the Other as Other, as fully human, as a full member of society:

The cultural, linguistic and intellectual capital of our societies will increase dramatically when we stop seeing culturally and linguistically diverse children as ‘a problem to be solved’ and instead open our eyes to the linguistic, cultural, and intellectual resources they bring from their homes to our schools and societies. (Cummins, 2001, p. 20)

I would like to end this thesis with some personal reflections regarding the Cypriot context that have emerged out of this study. The existing reality of the ongoing conflict in the Cypriot context adds further layers of complexity to the already challenging, risky and uncomfortable task of disrupting established ways of thinking and acting. Although the reality of the conflict cannot be denied, if we are to pave the way for the transformation of this reality, it seems necessary to imagine new realities that transcend the current empirical reality. The ways in which the collective memories of the past and ‘our’ identities are constructed through the conflict discourse in schools create a narrow framework for understanding the relationship between the ethnic Self and the ethnic Other. The

essentialist understanding of 'Turks' and the narrow and exclusive understanding of national identity promoted through this discourse construct rigid borders between 'us' and 'them' and seem to affect constructions of various Others in Greek-Cypriot society, who although differently positioned, may still be understood in essentialist terms. If the aim is a future Cypriot society that is united, democratic and egalitarian where there is 'positive', and thus, sustainable peace (Galtung, 1996) and the multiple diverse ethnic groups cohabiting the island do not merely coexist but are included, recognized and respected as full members of society, then it seems necessary to create new narratives, new identities, which are not essentialist but fluid, hybrid, in a state of being and constant becoming, which are not exclusive but inclusive of the Other, which are not in opposition but interconnected with the Other.

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Appendices

Appendix A Participant Information Leaflet for Staff Members

Intercultural Education in Greek-Cypriot Primary Schools

Participant Information Leaflet



THE UNIVERSITY
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Dear colleagues,

You are being invited to take part in this study. Before deciding whether you wish to take part, please read this information leaflet, which provides you with information about the research and what participation in it entails. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask me.

Purpose of the study

My name is Emilia Georgiou and I am a Greek-Cypriot teacher and a PhD candidate at the University of Edinburgh. I am conducting this research to explore how cultural diversity and intercultural education are understood and experienced in Greek-Cypriot primary education.

The significant changes in the demography of Cyprus in the last decade as well as Cyprus' accession into the European Union have led the Ministry of Education and Culture to adopt the intercultural approach for the inclusion of other-language speaking pupils and for the development of trust and affirmation and combating negative stereotypes and prejudice among students. This study aims at enhancing understanding of the opportunities and challenges Greek-Cypriot primary schools and teachers have in their efforts to implement intercultural education.

What is involved in participating

This study involves interviews with the head teacher, the teacher(s) of Greek as an additional language and two interviews with two teachers; tasks related to the topic of cultural diversity with the participant teachers' pupils for two teaching periods; and break and lesson observations for 2 teaching periods for 4 days a week per class and 2 periods per week for the Greek as a second / foreign language class. Follow-up interviews with some of the pupils may be needed to clarify unclear points made or to probe into interesting views and make sure that the pupils' views are represented accurately. Moreover, documents, such as circulars and school policy documents relating to intercultural education, will be collected.

The research will last three weeks, which, however, will not be consecutive. Specifically, the weeks I am planning to be at your school are the following:

1st week: (Observations, 1st interview with the teacher and collection of documents)

2nd week: (Observations, interviews with the head teacher and the Greek as a second / foreign language teacher, tasks with the pupils for 1 period)

3rd week: (Observations, tasks with the pupils and possibly individual or group interviews with some of the pupils - At the end of the research: 2nd interview with the teachers and collection of any new documents)

The interviews with the teachers will last approximately 45 minutes and will take place at a time and place that is convenient for you. The second interview with the class teachers is expected to last about 30 minutes and the interview with the head teacher is expected to last about an hour. Pupil interviews will last 10-30 minutes depending on the number of the pupils who will participate and they will take place at a time that will be agreed upon with the teacher.

Your views regarding the topic are really important for my research and there are no right or wrong replies. This study aims at providing you the space to voice your own views, ideas, suggestions and concerns about interculturalism and intercultural education based on your knowledge and lived experience of Greek-Cypriot primary education. By casting light on the current situation with respect to intercultural education within schools, this study hopes to contribute to taking intercultural education forward at policy as well as at school and classroom level. Although no sensitive issues are expected to arise, your participation is voluntary and you may avoid discussing any issues that make you feel uncomfortable or even withdraw from the study at any stage without providing a reason.

Observations and the tasks with the children will take place after consultation with the participant teachers. In addition, pupils' and their parents' informed consents will be sought.

Usage of the data and confidentiality

With your consent, interviews will be audio-recorded and if parents and pupils provide their consent, the tasks with the pupils will be audio-recorded, too. The recordings will allow me to have an accurate record of the interviews and the activities and to make sure that no information is missed or misinterpreted due to insufficient notes.

I will transcribe the audio-recordings and I will store the recordings and the transcripts on a password protected computer, to which I am the only person who has access. Excerpts from the transcripts will be used in my PhD thesis and in journal articles or conferences. All names including that of the school will be replaced with pseudonyms. Finally, the recordings will be deleted five years after the completion of my PhD and I will only retain the anonymized transcripts.

Value of this study

This research aims at informing policy makers, teacher educators and teachers in Cyprus about current constructions of cultural diversity and intercultural education in Greek-Cypriot primary schools and factors that seem to shape them. Thus, the findings of this research may assist them review policies, in-service and pre-service education and pedagogical practices respectively with a view to take intercultural education forward at policy as well as at school and classroom level.

Next step

If you would like to take part in this research, please read the consent form carefully, sign it and return it to me at my next visit to your school on (date). If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask me. You can contact me by phone on: ...or email me at: ...

This research is under the supervision of:

Dr Lorna Hamilton

Email: Lorna.Hamilton@ed.ac.uk

Dr Rowena Arshad

Email: rowena.arshad@ed.ac.uk

Thank you for your interest and your time!

Appendix B Consent Forms for Staff Members

Intercultural Education in Greek-Cypriot Primary Schools

Consent Form for Teachers



THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH

I have read and understood the participant information leaflet and I wish to take part in this research. I understand that my participation involves:

- being interviewed twice-once at the beginning for approximately 45 minutes and again at the end of the research for about 30 minutes - at a time and place to be agreed
- having a small number of my lessons observed during a three-week period
- agreeing for my pupils to participate in tasks related to the research for two teaching periods and if needed, for some of them to take part in interviews, provided that their parents and the pupils give their consent

The data collected will be anonymized and will only be used for the purposes of this study and for subsequent publications or other research outputs. All names as well as the name of the school will be replaced with pseudonyms. Any identifying information will not be included.

I also understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

School: _____

Contact Number: _____

Email: _____

Please sign below if you consent to having your interview audio recorded

Signature: _____



Intercultural Education in Greek-Cypriot Primary Schools

Consent Form for Headteachers

I have read and understood the participant information leaflet and I wish to take part in this research. I understand that my participation involves:

- being interviewed for approximately 60 minutes at a time and place to be agreed with the researcher
- providing the researcher with a copy of circulars and school policy documents that are related to intercultural education

The data collected will be anonymized and will only be used for the purposes of this study and for subsequent publications or other research outputs. All names as well as the name of the school will be replaced with pseudonyms. Any identifying information will not be included.

I also understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time.

Name:

Signature:

Date:

School:

Contact Number:

Email:

Please sign below if you consent to having your interview audio recorded.

Signature: _____



Intercultural Education in Greek-Cypriot Primary Schools

Consent Form for Greek as an Additional Language Teachers

I have read and understood the participant information leaflet and I wish to take part in this research. I understand that my participation involves:

- being interviewed for approximately 45 minutes at a time and place to be agreed with the researcher
- having a small number of my lessons observed during a three-week period

The data collected from the interviews and observations will be anonymized and will only be used for the purposes of this study and for subsequent publications or other research outputs. All names as well as the name of the school will be replaced with pseudonyms. Any identifying information will not be included.

I also understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time.

Name:

Signature:

Date:

School:

Contact Number:

Email:

Please sign below if you consent to having your interview audio recorded.

Signature: _____

Appendix C Participant Information Leaflet for Pupils



THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH

Intercultural Education in Greek-Cypriot Primary Schools



My name is Emilia Georgiou. I am an English teacher. I study at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland. I want to find out about how different people in Cyprus live and study together. I am learning about intercultural education.

What is the study about?

At school and in our neighbourhood we meet children from many different countries. I want to find out how children from different countries learn and play together in primary schools.

What will happen?

I will be in your school for three weeks. I will join you in lessons and also at break time. You will see me taking some notes so that I can remember what I see and hear.







We will also do some fun activities together in your classroom. These activities will be about different cultures and may include drawing, story-telling, discussion or making a poster. I will keep any drawings or posters you make that day to remember what you create.



After the activities, if I have some questions, I may need to talk to some of the pupils and ask them about their drawings or posters or about things we discussed during the activities.

I may record the activities and the interviews with you, as it will be difficult for me to take notes of all the interesting things you say. I will record them only if you agree. I may use some of what you say in my study. But no one will know who you are, as I will not use your real name.

Do I have to take part?

Only if you want to! Even if you agree to take part today, you may change your mind any time. Simply draw  next to your name on the table which will be hanging in your classroom. If you want to take part again, simply draw  .

You can take part in all or some of the activities. If you don't want to answer the questions, simply say: 'I don't want to answer this.' It is OK to say Stop or No.

Remember that this research is not related to your schoolwork and not taking part in the research will not affect your schoolwork or your grades.

What's next?

If you have any questions about this research at any time, ask me! It is important that you understand what's happening.



Please keep this leaflet and complete the form indicating whether you want to take part or not in this study. Please return the form to me now or to your teacher by...

Thank you!



Appendix D Consent Form for Pupils



THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH

Intercultural Education in Greek-Cypriot Primary Schools



Please tick the appropriate boxes

Yes No

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| I have read and understood the participant information leaflet. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the research. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw from the study at any time, without giving any reason. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I agree to take part in the study. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Please circle one of the two pictures below to indicate if you agree to be audio-recorded during the activities sessions.



Yes

No

Please circle one of the two pictures below to indicate if you would be happy to be interviewed after the activities sessions.



Yes

No

Please circle one of the two pictures below to indicate if you would be happy for the interview to be audio-recorded.



Yes



No

Note: This is just to give me a rough idea and I will ask you again for your permission before the activities sessions and the interviews.

Name of participant	Signature	Date
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Appendix E Information Letter for Parents



THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Research on Intercultural Education in Greek-Cypriot Primary Schools

My name is Emilia Georgiou and for the past 13 years I have been an English teacher. Now I am a PhD candidate at the University of Edinburgh. The topic of my PhD is Intercultural Education in Greek-Cypriot Primary Schools.

The significant changes in the demography of Cyprus the last decade and Cyprus' accession into the European Union have led the Ministry of Education and Culture to adopt the intercultural approach as a basic dimension of its educational policy. My PhD research focuses on the ways in which cultural diversity and intercultural education are understood and experienced in Greek-Cypriot primary education.

What it involves

The school your child attends is one of the primary schools that will take part in this research. I have received the consent of the head teacher and the approval of the Ministry of Education and Culture. My research has also been approved by the University of Edinburgh School of Education Ethics Committee. I will visit the school for 3 weeks from the end of March until the beginning of June. Within these weeks I will observe lessons for two teaching periods for four days a week. In addition, children's games during breaks will be observed to experience how pupils understand and respond to cultural diversity.

I will also do some activities with the pupils for two teaching periods to explore their perceptions of cultural diversity. These activities may include storytelling, drawing, making a poster or discussions. The activities will be determined in collaboration with

their teacher, who will be in class during the conduct of the activities. I will collect and keep the pupils' drawings and posters, as they will be used for my research.

After the activities, if needed, there may be some follow-up interviews with some of the pupils. These will be conducted at school at a time determined in agreement with the teacher and the pupils and will last 10-30 minutes, depending on the number of the pupils who will take part. These interviews will help me clarify any unclear points made and avoid misinterpretations and they will contribute to ensuring that the pupils' views are accurately represented in my research.

Confidentiality and Use of Data

If you and the children agree, I would like to audio-record the activities and the interviews. This will enable me to have an accurate record and to make sure that no information is missed, as it will be difficult for me to keep notes, while conducting the activities and the interviews. The recordings will be stored on a password protected computer, to which I am the only person who has access. These recordings will not be broadcast and will only be used for the purposes of the study. All names of the pupils, the teachers, the head teacher and the name and location of the school will be replaced with pseudonyms in my PhD thesis and in any publications or written reports of this study, so that the participants cannot be identified.

The findings of this study will contribute to a deeper understanding of how cultural diversity and intercultural education are currently understood and how intercultural education is implemented in Greek-Cypriot primary schools. They will be useful for policy makers, teacher educators and practitioners to inform their efforts to ensure that the education provided at Greek-Cypriot primary schools is inclusive of all pupils and cultivates respect towards diversity.

Parents' and Children's Consent

Your consent as well as your child's consent are necessary for the child to be able to participate in this study. Once I have your consent, I will ask for your child's consent, too.

I have explained to the children that they can withdraw from the study or refrain from any activities or the interviews at any time and this will be respected.

I hope that you will support this study. If you do not wish your child to participate in the research or do not wish the activities and the interviews to be audio-recorded, please sign the attached form and return it to the school by If you would like further information about this research, please do not hesitate to contact me. I will be at the school for this purpose on from until..... Alternatively, you can email me at... .

This research is under the supervision of:

Dr Lorna Hamilton Email: Lorna.Hamilton@ed.ac.uk

Dr Rowena Arshad Email: rowena.arshad@ed.ac.uk

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and for your help.

Yours sincerely,

Emilia Georgiou

Appendix F Consent Form for Parents



THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH

Intercultural Education in Greek-Cypriot Primary Schools

Parental Consent Form for ZEP School

Please complete this form **only if you do not want** your child to take part in the study or to be audio-recorded. Please make sure that you return this form to the teacher by If this form is not returned, I will assume that you agree to your child's participation in the research.

I _____ (your name) do not
give my permission for _____ (child's name),
who attends the _____ (name of school),

Please tick (✓)

1. to take part in the research.

2. to be audio-recorded during the activities.

3. to be audio-recorded if he/she is asked to take part in an interview.

Signature _____ Date _____



Parental Consent Form

Please complete this form and return it to the teacher by

I _____ (your
name)

have been informed about the research on Intercultural Education in Greek-
Cypriot State Primary Schools and I am happy for / do not want
_____ (child's name), who attends the _____
grade of _____ (name of school), to participate in this
study.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix G Interview Schedule for Head Teachers

Time:

Place:

Introduction

- Welcome and thank interviewee for his/her consent to participate in the research
- Briefly explain the purpose of the interview (to explore your understanding of intercultural education and cultural diversity, the school approach to intercultural education, your views on support provided to schools and the challenges the school and teachers face with respect to intercultural education)
- Briefly explain the usage and storage of data (reason for recording, transcription, storage on my personal PC, destruction of recordings after the completion of my PhD-retention of transcripts)
- Explain how the confidentiality of data will be preserved (no info from which you could be identified will be disclosed /quotes will be used but name of interviewee and school will be replaced with pseudonyms)
- Any questions?
- Consent to the recording of the interview?

Topic Guide (to be used flexibly as a checklist of issues to be covered)

1. Working Experience in a Multicultural School

- How long have you been the head teacher of this school? Have you selected this school? If yes, why?
- Have you worked before in a school with a culturally diverse pupil population? How long?
- *For the H/T of the school which has only Greek-Cypriot pupils:* Have you ever worked at a school with a culturally diverse pupil population?

2. Understanding of Cultural Diversity

How would you define the term cultural diversity?

3. Understanding of Intercultural Education

The Ministry of Education and Culture adopts the intercultural approach as the most effective approach to the inclusion of other-language speaking pupils and to the development of trust and affirmation and to combating negative stereotypes and prejudice among students.

- Have you and/or the teachers received any guidelines by the Ministry of Education and Culture about what is meant by the term intercultural education and how it is to be implemented?
- If yes, how does the Ministry define intercultural education and its implementation?
- If no, what do you understand by the term intercultural education?

4. Support from the Ministry of Education and Culture

- Does the school receive any support by the Ministry of Education and Culture to implement intercultural education? If yes, what kind of support? (e.g. funding, teacher training)

5. School Approach to Intercultural Education

- Is intercultural education or cultural diversity an issue that has been raised in the weekly staff meetings? If yes, why?
- How confident do you think teachers are to deal with cultural diversity and implement intercultural education in their classes?
- Does the school use a particular approach / approaches to intercultural education? If yes, could you describe it / them?

Probes:

- How does the school attempt to combat stereotypes and discrimination and help all pupils develop positive attitudes towards cultural diversity in the school and in society?
- Does the school create links with the community? How?

For the two schools with mixed student population:

- How does the school recognize and respect the diversity in the school and ensure that all pupils perceive themselves to be included and valued in the school community?

- Are other-language-speaking pupils taught their mother tongue at school?
 - Are they allowed to use their home language at school?
 - How do you ensure that all pupils have a say regarding issues that matter to them?
 - How do you ensure that all pupils' parents, including those for whom Greek is an additional language, are encouraged and supported to be involved in their children's education and participate in the governing bodies of the school?
 - How is the progress of bilingual and minority ethnic pupils monitored?
 - Is there special provision for pupils who have difficulties because of their different linguistic and cultural background?
 - How is the effectiveness of this provision (e.g. Greek as an additional language courses) assessed?
 - How are racist incidents dealt with? Is there a school policy and a set of strategies for dealing with such incidents, such as name-calling and bullying?
 - How do you make sure that pupils are encouraged to report racist incidents to members of staff?
 - Are any extra-curricular activities organized aiming at the development of good relations among pupils?
- How was this approach developed? (teachers', parents', pupils' involvement? school inspector? local educational authority? Ministry of Education and Culture?)
 - Does it seem to be effective? In what sense? How is its effectiveness assessed?
 - What opportunities and challenges does the school face in its efforts to implement intercultural education?
 - Is intercultural education a current priority for the school? Why?
- If the school does not use a specific approach, why not? Do some of the teachers attempt to implement intercultural education? In what way?

6. Suggestions for Improvement

What do you think needs to be done at classroom, school, local and national level to take intercultural education forward in Greek-Cypriot primary education?

7. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Thank you very much for your time and your cooperation!

Appendix H Interview Schedule for Teachers

Time:

Place:

Introduction

- Welcome and thank interviewee for his/her consent to participate in the research
- Briefly explain the purpose of the interview (to explore your understanding of and views on intercultural education and cultural diversity, your approach to intercultural education, your views on support and training provided to you and the challenges you face)
- Briefly explain the usage and storage of data (reason for recording, transcription, storage on my personal PC, destruction of recordings after the completion of my PhD-retention of transcripts)
- Explain how the confidentiality of data will be preserved (no access to other info about you other than what you provide me with / no info from which you could be identified will be disclosed /quotes will be used but name of interviewee and school will be replaced with pseudonyms)
- Any questions?
- Consent to the recording of the interview?

Topic Guide (to be used flexibly as a checklist of issues to be covered)

1. Teacher's Working Experience

- How long have you been working in this school?
- Have you worked in other schools, too?

Probe: If yes, in Nicosia? What was their student population like in terms of ethnic and socioeconomic background?

- How long have you been working as a teacher? How long have you been working / worked in 'multicultural' schools?
- Have you chosen to work in this/these school(s)? If yes, why?

2. Teacher's Life Experiences

- Where do you come from?
- Have you spent all your life in Cyprus? Have you lived abroad for studies or any other reason or maybe spent some time abroad on holidays?
- What made you decide to choose teaching as a career?

3. Teacher's Beliefs about the Purpose of Education

What do you believe the purpose of education is?

4. Teacher's Beliefs about the Teacher's Role

How would you define the teacher's role in class?

5. Teacher's Perceptions of their Teaching Style

How would you describe your teaching style? Please illustrate your response by means of examples.

Probes:

- Which factors affect your teaching style/ practices?
- What kind of activities do you use?
- Which type of activities is most frequently used? Why?
- What kinds of interaction prevail in your classroom?
(Teacher-Pupil/T-Ps/P-T/P-P)
- Do your pupils take initiatives, make suggestions or mainly respond to your questions?
- How are pupils assessed?
 - Do you notice any differences in achievement among your Greek-Cypriot and other-language-speaking pupils?

6. Teacher's Beliefs about the Role of the Coursebook

- What do you think the role of the coursebook is?

- Would you describe your lesson plan as tightly structured or flexible? Please justify your reply.

7. Teacher's Understanding of Cultural Diversity

- How would you define cultural diversity?
- What do you think of cultural diversity in the school and in Greek-Cypriot society?

For the teachers of the two schools with mixed student populations:

- How do you think cultural diversity may affect pupils' learning, academic and social inclusion?
- How many pupils are there in your class? How many of them are Greek Cypriots? What is the ethnic, religious and linguistic background of the other pupils? What is your pupils' socioeconomic background?
- What measures do you take to address the challenges they may face?

8. Teacher's Views about their Pupils' Attitudes towards Cultural Diversity in the School and/or in the Community

- How do your pupils respond to their classmates with a different ethnic, linguistic, religious and cultural background?
- Is there a school policy and a set of procedures for dealing with racist incidents, such as name calling and bullying?
- How do your pupils respond to the cultural diversity in the community?

9. Teacher's Understanding of and Beliefs about Intercultural Education

The recommended approach by the Ministry of Education and Culture to cultural diversity is intercultural education. What does intercultural education mean to you?

Probes:

- What would you define as the aim(s) of intercultural education?
- How do you think it should be implemented?

10. Teacher's Views about the School Approach to Intercultural Education

Does the school use a particular approach / approaches to intercultural education? If yes, could you describe it / them?

Probes:

- How does the school attempt to combat stereotypes and discrimination?
- Does the school recognize and respect the diversity in the school and ensure that all pupils are included in the school community? How?
- Are other-language-speaking pupils taught their mother tongue at school?
- Are they allowed to use their home language at school?
- Does the school create links with the community? How?
- Are all pupils' parents encouraged to be involved in their children's education and participate in the governing bodies of the school? How?
- How does the school help all pupils develop positive attitudes towards cultural diversity in the school and in society?

Do you find it / them effective? If not, how do you think the school approach could be improved?

11. Teacher's Approach to Intercultural Education

- What is your approach to intercultural education?
- Do you try to promote intercultural education through your work? If yes, how? If no, why not?

If yes, probes to explore their familiarity with and respect for all pupils' home culture, religion and language:

- Do you have regular contact with all pupils' parents? What is usually the purpose of this contact?
- Do you speak any of your non-Greek Cypriot pupils' home languages or is there a teacher assistant who does?

- Are they allowed to use their home language in class?
- Are you familiar with any of your non-Greek Cypriot pupils' cultures or religions? Are they included or represented in the textbooks?
- How do you cater for the different needs and interests of your pupils?
- How do you help all your pupils participate in the learning process and achieve?
- How do you help your pupils develop positive attitudes towards different cultures, ethnicities, languages and religions?
- Do you help your pupils develop critical thinking skills? How?

12. Teacher's Views about the New Curriculum

- Are you following the new curriculum?
- If yes, the old curriculum has been described as ethnocentric and culturally monolithic, what do you think of the new curriculum?

If teachers describe it as more inclusive and intercultural, probes:

- In what ways? How does it meet the needs of the multicultural class?
- How do pupils respond to it?

13. Teacher's Views about Support

- Have you attended a course on intercultural education or on cultural diversity during your initial teacher education?
- Have you received any support from the Ministry of Education and Culture, from the school inspector or from the school to implement intercultural education? (e.g. training, incentives, in-school professional development through collaboration with colleagues and head teacher, teacher assistants)

Probes:

- If yes, has it been helpful?
- If no, do you feel that you need support? What kind of support do you think would be useful?

14. Teacher's Views about the Challenges to the Implementation of Intercultural Education in Greek-Cypriot Primary Schools and Classrooms

- What difficulties or challenges do you face in your efforts to promote intercultural education?
- What do you think needs to be done to take intercultural education forward in Greek-Cypriot primary education at the classroom, school, local and national level?

15. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Thank you very much for your time and your significant contribution to this study!

Appendix I Interview Schedule for GAL Teachers

Time:

Place:

Introduction

- Welcome and thank interviewee for his/her consent to participate in the research
- Briefly explain the purpose of the interview (to understand the support provided to non-Greek-Cypriot primary school pupils for their inclusion in mainstream education)
- Briefly explain the usage and storage of data (reason for recording, transcription, storage on my personal PC, destruction of recordings after the completion of my PhD-retention of transcripts)
- Explain how the confidentiality of data will be preserved (no info from which you could be identified will be disclosed /quotes will be used but your name and the name of the school will be replaced with pseudonyms)
- Any questions?
- Consent to the recording of the interview?

Topic Guide (to be used flexibly as a checklist of issues to be covered)

1. Working Experience and Training

- How long have you been working as a teacher of Greek as a second / foreign language?
- Do you teach in more than one schools?
- Had you had any teaching experience in multicultural classrooms before you were assigned this role?
- Have you selected this post or were you assigned this post by the ministry?
 - If your own selection, why?
 - If the ministry's selection, how is this selection made?
What are the criteria one needs to meet to work as a teacher of Greek as a second / foreign language?
 - Does the ministry provide some training to prepare teachers for this post?

- If yes, what type of training? How long does it last?
- Have you found it helpful or do you feel that more support is needed?
- If more support is needed, what kind of support?
- Why? What challenges do you face?

2. Understanding of Intercultural Education

How would you define intercultural education?

- What would you define as the aim(s) of intercultural education?
- How do you think it should be implemented?
- To what extent is it implemented in this school? How about other schools where you teach?
- What opportunities are there for its implementation?
- What are the challenges to its implementation?
- How can it be taken forward?
- Do you consider the courses on Greek as a second / foreign language to be part of intercultural education? Please justify your reply.

3. Structure of the Courses on Greek as a Second / Foreign Language

- Who attends these courses? Who decides? (teachers, head teachers, parents, pupils?)
- Are there levels? If yes, how many levels are there? How is it determined which level each pupil attends?
- Where do these courses take place?
- When? (after school? do pupils skip other classes?)
- How often do these lessons take place? How long do they last?

4. Content of the Courses

- Is the teaching material set by the ministry or is it determined by you?
 - If it is determined by you, how do you select what to teach? Is there collaboration with the teachers?
 - If it is set by the ministry, do you prefer to go by the book or be flexible in terms of what to teach and how?

- Is the focus of these lessons solely on teaching the Greek language or on familiarizing the pupils with the Greek culture, as well?
- What do you think is the role of the pupils' home culture and language?

5. Teaching Style

How would you describe your teaching style? Please illustrate your response by means of examples.

Probes:

- Which factors affect your teaching style/ practices?
- What kind of activities do you use?
- Which type of activities is most frequently used? Why?
- What kinds of interaction prevail in your classroom?
(Teacher-Pupil/T-Ps/P-T/P-P)
- Do your pupils take initiatives, make suggestions or mainly respond to your questions?

6. Assessment

How is the pupils' progress in learning Greek as a second / foreign language assessed?

7. Pupils

- How would you describe the pupils' attitude towards these courses?
 - Pupils who attend these courses (high levels of interest and motivation- opportunity to learn and communicate / embarrassed for their difference / do not like these courses-feel segregated from the rest of the class?)
 - Pupils who do not attend these courses (make fun of those who do / view them as inferior / empathetic-willing to help other-language speaking pupils?)
- What is the attendees' academic achievement like? Does it improve as they make progress in learning Greek?
- Based on your experience, would you describe these pupils as academically and socially included in the school? Please justify your reply.

- Do you think that these courses have a positive impact on the pupils' academic and social inclusion? Please justify your reply.
- Are there any other measures taken by the school to support their inclusion, besides courses for Greek as a second / foreign language?
- If yes, what are they?
- Do you think they are effective? Please justify your reply.

8. Suggestions for Improvement

Are there any changes you would like to suggest in policy and practice in the field of intercultural education at a national, local, school and classroom level?

9. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Thank you very much for your time and your contribution to my research!

Appendix J Observation Schedules

Lesson Observation Schedule

School:

Grade:

Teacher:

Number of pupils:

Subject:

Date:

CLASSROOM

1. Layout
2. Seating Arrangements
3. Decoration
4. Equipment

LESSON

1. Content
 - *Flexible or solely focus on coursebook? Other materials used besides the coursebook? Purpose?*
 - *Range of worldviews presented? Reference to other cultures-in what way? Stereotypes?*
 - *Are issues related to difference and discrimination raised? In what way?*
 - *Attempts to relate content to pupils' ethnic, cultural, religious, linguistic background / to their interests?*

- *Differentiated material depending on pupils' needs?*
- *Range of knowledge, skills, competencies covered? Critical thinking skills?*

2. Objectives: Are the objectives of the lesson and the activities made clear to the pupils?

3. Teaching approach(es)

- *Teacher-centred or learner-centred?*
- *Range of teaching approaches to cater for pupils' different learning styles or not? If yes, what are the teaching approaches employed?*
- *How does the teacher make sure that all pupils have understood? (e.g. instructions of tasks in pupils' mother tongue)*

4. Decision making concerning content, materials and approaches (*who decides? are pupils involved / consulted?*)

5. Main interaction pattern (*teacher-pupil, teacher-pupils, pupil-pupil, pupil-pupils*)

6. Teacher - Pupil(s) Interaction

- *Are all pupils praised for their effort?*
- *Are some pupils constantly reprimanded?*
- *How is misbehaviour dealt with?*
- *How is low achievement dealt with?*

7. Pupil-pupil(s) interaction

- *Do pupils try to help each other?*
- *Are they competitive?*
- *Do they make fun of pupils who make mistakes / are different?*
- *Are other-language-speaking pupils allowed to use their mother tongue?*

8. Main types of activities (*individual, pair or group work? who decides who works with whom? On the basis of what criteria?*)

9. Pupils' participation (Simply respond to the teacher's questions or actively participate? Do all pupils participate?)

10. Any activities particularly targeted at prejudice reduction and relationship building among pupils?

11. Assessment (*what is assessed? forms of assessment? e.g. self-assessment, peer assessment, tests etc*)

Schedule for School Observations

Date:

Time:

School:

1. Facilities (sports facilities, drama room, computer lab, events hall, school counseling etc.)
2. Equipment (e.g. computers, blackboards / white boards, projectors, radiators, air conditioning etc.)
3. Size and condition of the school and play area
4. Decoration (e.g. pupils' work, posters with messages promoting good intercultural relations and anti-racist messages, the messages are in various languages)
5. Ethnic and Religious Symbols (e.g. flag(s), religious icons, pictures of ethnic heroes)
6. Morning assembly (head teacher's announcements, morning prayer)

Are pupils' achievements in various fields-not only academic achievements- praised?

Is reference made to issues related to equity, fairness and racism?

Are positive attitudes, such as challenging racism, rewarded?

7. Extra-curricular and social activities (what kind of activities? which pupils take part? what is the purpose of these activities? do they reflect cultural and religious diversity?)

- Festivals
- Sports activities
- Afternoon classes
- School meals

8. Events that foster parental and / or community involvement in school

How is minority ethnic parents' involvement encouraged? How is the fact that some of them may not be proficient in Greek addressed?

Break Observation Schedule

Date:

Time:

School:

Grade:

1. What do pupils play?
2. Who do pupils play with?
3. Do they fight? If yes, who against whom?
4. Groups? (homogeneous in terms of ethnicity or mixed? always the same or mix with other pupils?)
5. Any isolates?
6. Any forms of bullying? If yes, who bullies whom? How do teachers react? Is there a school policy on bullying? Are teachers familiar with it? Do teachers deal with such incidents in a consistent way?
7. Do pupils report bullying? How?

Appendix K Description of Participatory Methods

Game

As one of the most common activities suggested by pupils was playing games, we started our activities with a game that aimed at introducing them to the concept of cultural diversity in a fun way. Each pupil got a potato and they had four minutes to examine it carefully, give it a name and think of three of its characteristics. Then, after they introduced their potatoes to the class, I asked for four assistants, gave them a bag each and they went round and their classmates put their potatoes in the bag. After the potatoes were mixed, the pupils were asked to identify their potatoes. They all did so and we drew the conclusion that although the potatoes all looked more or less the same in the bag, each of them differed from the rest and had its own unique characteristics. Comparisons were drawn with people and with my help, pupils identified various aspects which contribute to people's different cultures, such as race, ethnicity, religion, language, socio-economic background, and we discussed the way in which these may influence people's habits, experiences, worldviews and behaviours. Minority ethnic pupils contributed their own experiences or their parents' experiences. The older the pupils, the more information I could elicit from them.

Poster

In the 5th and 6th grades, instead of having an extensive discussion after the game, I asked pupils to form small groups of four or five pupils and create a poster recording their understandings of cultural diversity (see Appendix L for examples). Creating a poster was another activity recommended by the pupils and this activity was far less directed by me. The pupils were free to write anything they liked, use any format they liked and decorate their poster, if they wanted to. The children presented their posters and answered any questions from their

classmates and me. Pupils were also invited to share their relevant personal experiences in relation to cultural diversity.

Photo Elicitation

This activity aimed at exploring the extent to which the pupils understood the implications of cultural diversity in education and how minority ethnic pupils may feel in the Greek-Cypriot primary school. For this purpose, I showed the pupils two photos: one of a Chinese boy and one of a Syrian girl (see Appendix M). In classes with a Syrian refugee pupil, I presented the girl as Iraqi. Moreover, in the older classes (5th & 6th grade), I used a photo of an older girl, who was closer to the pupils' age. I briefly introduced the two children and explained that they had come to Cyprus with their families the previous year, hoping for a better life (see Appendix M for the information about each child provided to the pupils). Then, I asked the pupils how they thought these two children felt when they first went to the Greek-Cypriot primary school and why. This question gave rise to a discussion about minority ethnic pupils' experiences in school. The children were very interested in these two children and some of them even wanted to know which school they went to. They expressed a lot of ideas regarding these children's feelings and experiences and some of the minority ethnic pupils related them to their own feelings and experiences in the Greek-Cypriot primary school.

Sentence Completion Task

As I had noticed during the first round of activities that some pupils did not contribute to the discussions, I decided to start the second round with a handout entitled 'My Friends and I' (see Appendix N). In this handout, the pupils completed sentences about their best friends and their countries of origin; how often and where they met; their favourite game; and what they liked, disliked or would like to change at their school. Thus, their responses gave me an insight into

the role of ethnic background in friendship groups; whether pupils of a different ethnic background also met outside school and thus, whether such friendships were supported by their parents; and what their good and bad experiences in school were. This handout provided me, thus, with significant data which I could not access through observations or discussions alone.

Role Play

This activity aimed at eliciting information about the children's responses to cultural diversity. Instead of asking them directly which would probably have resulted in their giving me socially desirable replies, I decided to explore their attitudes through a role play, since acting usually facilitates people expressing their real views and attitudes, without the fear of being criticized or rejected.

After I reminded the pupils of the Chinese boy and the Syrian / Iraqi girl and I showed them the two photos again, I asked them to close their eyes and visualize what a break would be like for the two children in their new Greek-Cypriot school. After two minutes, I asked them to open their eyes and stand up. As soon as I signaled, pupils had to move towards one of two sides of the room depending on whether they believed that the two children's classmates played with them and helped them adjust to their new environment or that they avoided them and made fun of them. This facilitated their forming groups of three to five like-minded pupils to prepare a mini role play which would reflect a scene of a break, involving one of the two newly arrived children with their classmates. After ten minutes, which they were given to decide on the scenario, distribute parts and rehearse the scene, all groups were asked to perform their role play. Then, they were asked to describe their role play, so that I could have an as precise record of it as possible by audio-recording their narrative, as I had no permission to video record the role plays and taking notes was not possible at that time. Moreover, I asked them to explain why they had chosen to depict the scene in the specific way. Their replies allowed me an insight into their beliefs, understandings and experiences of cultural diversity within their schools and society. Nevertheless, in many cases, it is not

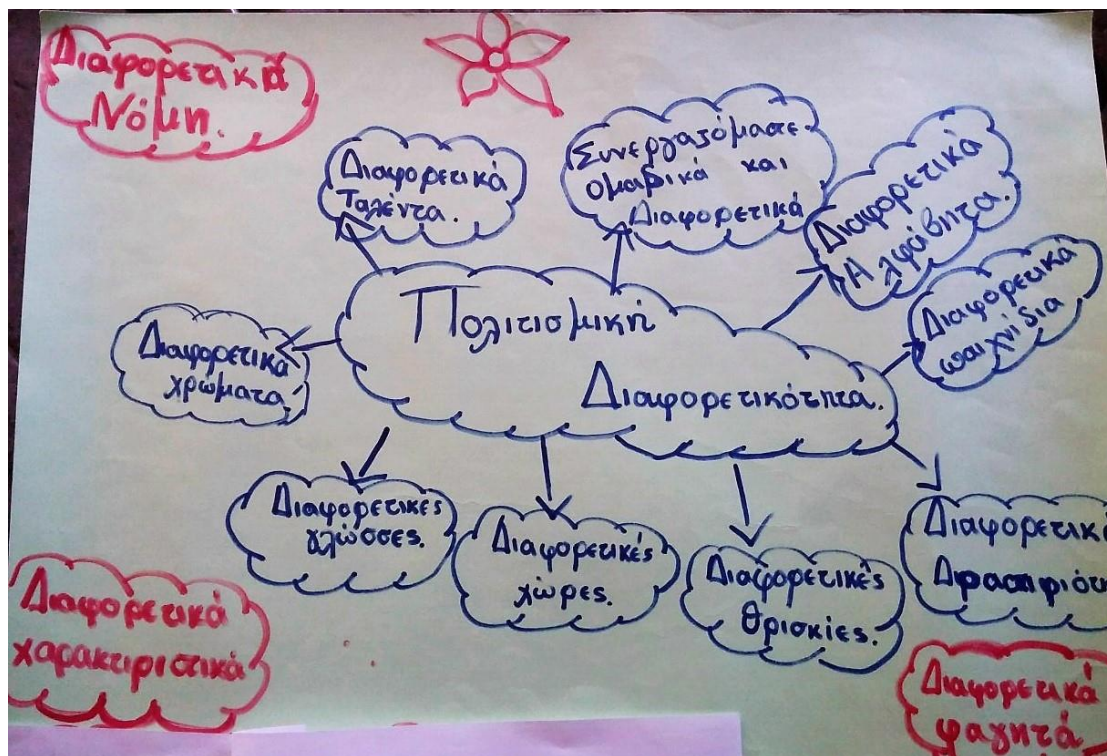
certain whether the role plays, many of which included scenes of bullying, reflected their personal responses to newly arrived migrant or refugee pupils or their beliefs about common responses to these groups in Greek-Cypriot schools and in society.

Video

The final activity involved watching a short video with anti-racist messages followed by a discussion. The video that was used with the 1st grade is a production of the Greek educational TV for primary school pupils (Educational TV, 2013). This video aims at sensitizing children to the concepts of racism and xenophobia and showing them through cartoons that difference does not entail a threat but enriches our life. The video that was used for the rest of the grades was produced by the pupils of a secondary school in Greece and is entitled 'We embrace diversity'. The aim of showing these videos was to raise pupils' awareness of racism and discrimination and their negative impact on the individual who is targeted and to leave children with the message that we need to challenge racism and embrace diversity.

Appendix L Examples of Children's Posters on Cultural Diversity

Poster 1 - ZEP, 5th grade

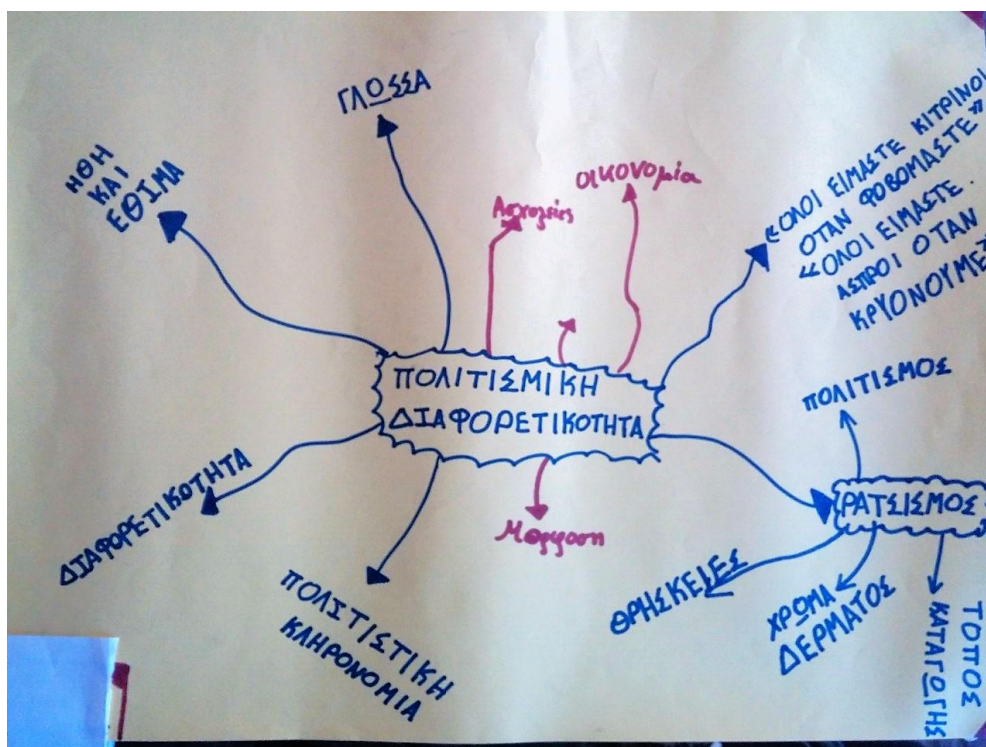


English Translation

Cultural Diversity

- Different laws
- Different talents
- We work in teams but differently.
- Different alphabets
- Different games
- Different activities
- Different food
- Different religions
- Different countries
- Different languages
- Different colours
- Different features

Poster 2 – Aphrodite School, 6th grade



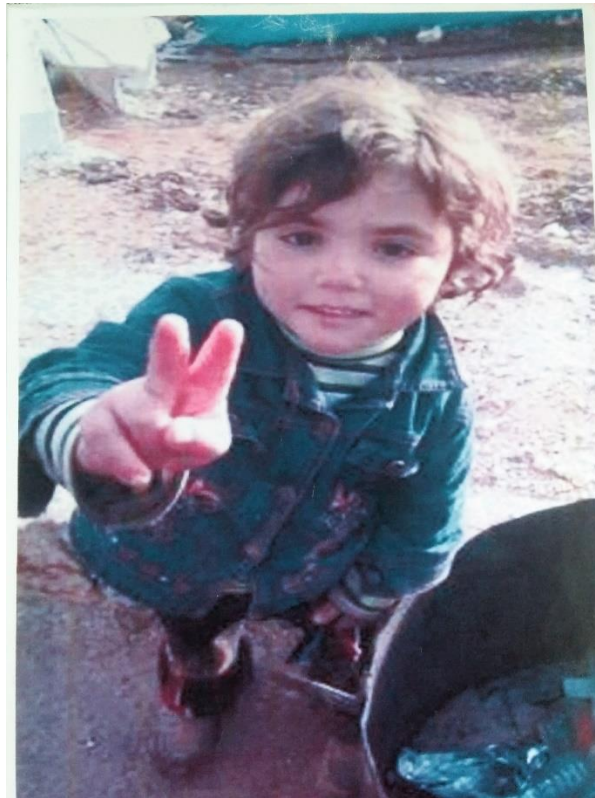
English Translation

CULTURAL DIVERSITY

- Manners and Customs
- Language
- Occupations
- Economy
- We are all yellow when we are afraid' 'We are all white when we are cold'
- Cultural Heritage
- Diversity
- Racism
 - Religions
 - Skin colour
 - Place of birth
 - Culture
- Education

Appendix M Photos for the Photo Elicitation Activity

Photo 1 – Pana (1st - 4th grade)



Information about Pana that I shared with the 1st - 4th grade pupils:

Pana is a girl from Syria who came to Cyprus with her family last September, fleeing from the war. Her family is very poor and came here, hoping for a better life. Pana is 7 years old and speaks Arabic. She is Muslim and she likes reading fairytales and drawing.

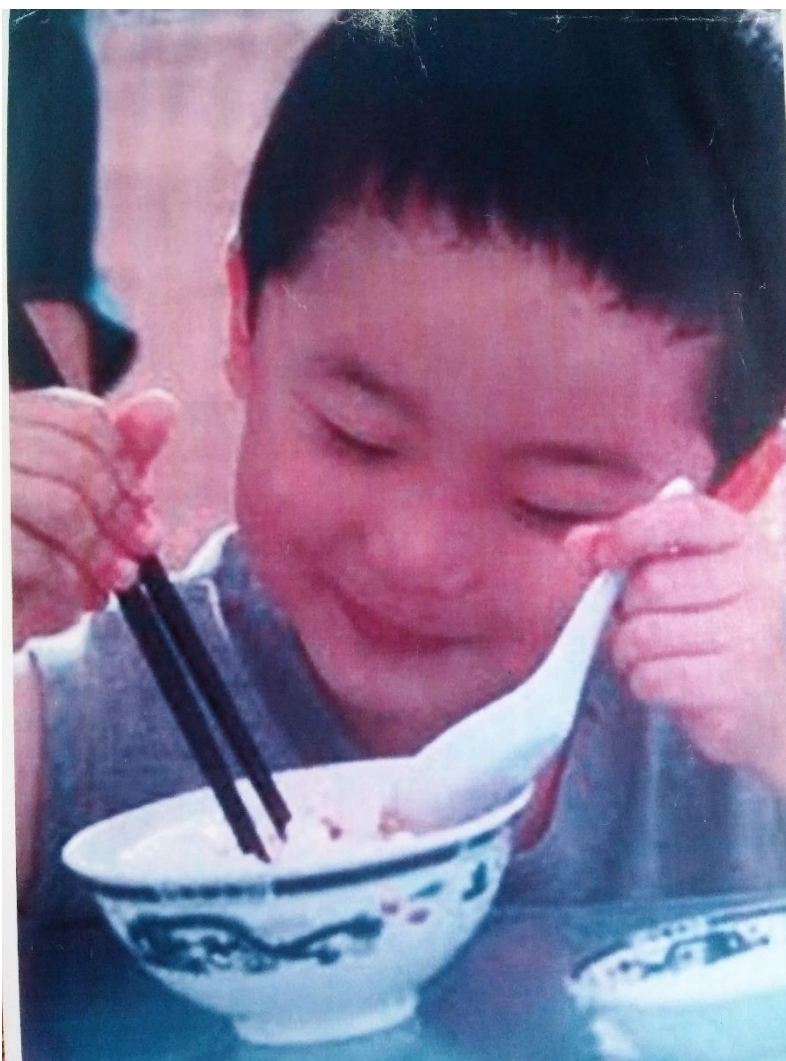
Photo 2 – Pana (5th – 6th grade)



Information about Pana that I shared with the 5th – 6th grade pupils:

Pana is a girl from Syria who came to Cyprus with her family last September, fleeing from the war. Her family is very poor and came here, hoping for a better life. Pana is 12 years old and speaks Arabic. She is Muslim and she likes reading fairytales, drawing and writing poems.

Photo 3 – Lee (1st - 6th grade)



Information about Lee that I shared with the pupils:

Lee came from China. His family owns a shop that sells Chinese things. He is 10 years old and he speaks Chinese. He is Buddhist. He loves eating rice, using chopsticks, and playing electronic games.

Appendix N Sentence Completion Task

My Friends and I in School and out of School



My name is _____.

I am in the _____ grade in _____.
(school name)

My best friends are _____

(names)

My friends are from _____

(countries of origin)

We meet _____

(where and how often)

Our favourite game is / Our favourite activity is _____

What I like most in school is _____

What I don't like in my school is _____

If I could change something in school, I would _____

Appendix O Data Collection Plan

1st week: Lesson observations for four teaching periods in each grade; break and school observations; 1st interview with the class teachers; collection of documents

2nd week: Lesson observations for four teaching periods in each grade; break and school observations; interviews with the head teacher and the GAL teacher; 1st round of activities with the pupils

3rd week: Lesson observations for four teaching periods in each grade; break and school observations; 2nd round of activities with the pupils; interviews with some pupils, if needed; 2nd interviews with the class teachers; collection of documents